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RENASCENCE

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Sean O'Faolain: Conjurer of Eden

BY NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

SOMEWHERE, lost in childhood, lie the uncharted springs that keep alive the secret beasts of cave and conduit, fable and fiction. Men pine for a return, and their activities become mere distractions on the way. Psychologists know of this when they speak of the death-wish in the womb; others know of it when they refer to Eden. The experience is general because in life's cycle the flowers that make the bridal bouquet come from the same garden as those that make the funeral wreath. The knowledge is both common to aristocrat and peasant, and in communities where the soil is a constant bond this tie is emphasized; in Ireland they light a candle for the newly dead—a symbol of their first *birth day* in the next world. Sean O'Faolain's work is lit by these candles; like Synge or Yeats his best work has been done at home—work that is strangely free of the artificial glare of the big city. London, Paris, and Zurich may have tempted him, but unlike Shaw or Joyce he has never become an exile. At the most exile for him has taken on the shape of partial retreats into the past as both a novelist and biographer.

In his first book, *A Nest of Simple Folk* (1933), O'Faolain adapts the saga form: beginning in the middle 'fifties of the last century, the novel ends with the 1916 Easter Rising. In its pages generations pass and die; yet they remain essentially people about whom you hear on your mother's knee. *A Nest of Simple Folk* is not contemporary in the sense that *Ulysses* (1922) is. In fact much of the book is quite literally hearsay—what Sean may have been told by his father who served with the Royal Irish Constabulary. Again O'Faolain's second novel, *Bird Alone* (1936), is another backward glance to the 'seventies when Corney, its narrator, was born. The conflicts that it presents dovetail with those of the first book—indeed with the whole O'Faolain canon. One critic, Donat O'Donnell, has defined these conflicts as "Parnellism" by which he means the struggle for national, spiritual, and sexual emancipation. Inevitably those characters that rebel against Church, State, and sexual prohibition become O'Faolain heroes. At first this may sound a provincial state of mind for an author, but remember that in this case the author, of his own choosing, is working in a provincial country where several of his books have been banned and where the monthly review that he founded, *The Bell*, is eyed suspiciously by the hierarchy.

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For example, in the nest of simple folk among which Corney lives, he has to prove his innocence in a police court by proving alternatively that he was in the woods with a girl at midnight. Elsie Sherlock's father rampages against Corney, forbidding his daughter to speak to him and fiercely castigating her for having "disgraced her brother at Maynooth." Corney finds himself hemmed in, unable to emancipate himself; convention forces the bowing of his will to that of the girl's father—an act of submission that he can only accept by repeating to himself the terrible way in which she has "let her family crucify her." The operative word is "crucify," just as "simple folk" are the operative words of the title. For however much these characters may pull against the bit, they cannot throw off the reins of their religion. At its kindest "Irish religion" is a leading rein. To a liberal, therefore, the temptation in an unquestioningly Catholic country is to look back to Eden; but this cannot be a whole-time adult occupation for the novelist. O'Faolain's simple folk when they become heroes look back or link themselves to men or movements of the past—with Land Leaguers or Fenians, with O'Connell, Parnell or Collins. These are semi-substitutes for Guardian Angels.

O'Faolain once took a big film tycoon to the Gresham Hotel in Dublin. It was the man's first visit to Ireland and, by way of keeping up the conversation he asked if the Gresham corresponded to either Claridges in London or the Waldorf in New York. "No," sighed the author. "It corresponds to the Garden of Eden. Except that they are dressed," and as he went on when he recorded the anecdote, "[my people] have certainly not eaten of the apple of knowledge."

The dilemma, then, that faces O'Faolain (as indeed it faces Irish letters) is to what extent Catholicism and nationalism are at loggerheads—or, put another way, to what extent do national loyalties tie Irish writers to the Catholic Church so that whatever they write must be principally for a home market that is unanimous in its religious beliefs? Remember a writer's first loyalty is always to his own countrymen, the interest of foreigners being subsidiary; universality is always achieved unconsciously—as in the case of Joyce's fame. These problems O'Faolain sees and clearly states; he knows that there are no ready-made answers to them and his work is largely an exploring of them.

In the story, "The Silence of the Valley," which opens the volume, *A Purse of Coppers* (1937), there is a repeated harking back on the note that "They must have had good times here, once"; and the soliloquy with which the story ends reflects the author's nostalgia for a resurrection of these "good times":

What image, I wondered, as I passed through them, could warm them as

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Wicklow priest had warned us for a few minutes in that carriage now chugging around the edge of the city to the sea? What image of life bursting like the spring, what triumph, what engendering love, so that those breasting mountains that now looked cold could appear brilliant and gay, the white land that seemed to sleep should appear to smile, and these people who huddled over the embers of their lives should become like the peasants who held the hand of Faust with their singing one Easter morning?

This is a conjuring of Eden before the Fall, a seeing of the "emerald isle" as a demi-paradise. Yet the voice of reason breaks in against that of fantasy. "Perhaps it was foolish to wish for such an image—so magnificent that it would have the power of a resurrection call." Still the image is never fully vanquished.

In *Teresa and Other Stories* (1947) there is the same image of Ireland before St. Patrick, an Ireland in which there is no dichotomy between patriotism and belief because in a demi-paradisal state no conflict exists. In "The Silence of the Valley" listen to peasants thinking and talking:

. . . To pass the time she started a discussion about large families and the ethics of birth control. He said that he believed that everybody "practised it in secret," a remark which put her into such good humour that, in gratitude, she made him happy by assuring him that in ten years' time the birth-rate in England would be the lowest in the world; and for the innocent joy he showed at this she glowed with so much good-feeling towards him that she told him also how hateful birth-control is to the poor in the East End of London.

"I always knew it," he cried joyfully. "Religion has nothing to do with these things. All that counts is the Natural Law. For, as I hope you do realize, there is a Law of Nature!"

Notice the siding with the poor—as the Fenians did. Notice too the natural sympathy with the people at the clergy's expense. Here are shades of Parnell again! Yet listen later to an extract from the end of this story, to its careful punning and play upon meaning:

"I hope we'll have that salmon that came over the mountains," smiled the Celt.

Nobody stirred.

"In America, you know, we call it the Fall."

"The Fall?" said the priest.

"The fall of the leaves," explained the soldier . . .

To keep to the spirit of punning, this is a dying fall. Notice the careful juxtaposition and frolicking with words (I use this phrase because I believe that it aptly fits O'Faolain's whimsicality). The American soldier is of the new world, the Irish priest of the old; but this is the reasoning of geographical fact. Both are closer related than one supposed because both were once

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children who shared a common heritage—namely, Eden. Yet, since then, there has been a loss of innocence, a Fall, a turning brown. The trees have shed their greenness, since perhaps even in the "Natural Law" the burgeoning of trees is only a symbol of that other Resurrection in the spring. "The spirit bloweth where it listeth" and so do leaves. O'Faolain's world is one of poetry where nonsense makes sense and where nursery rhymes (which are a derivative part of folk-lore) may prove the truest stories. This is the world turned topsy-turvy, but even in a world turned topsy-turvy there is a "Law of Nature" that holds.

IF the land is let to run riot it becomes a wilderness—that is the "Law of Nature." Yet before the Fall the world is described as a garden—Eden. Moreover a garden suggests some kind of pattern; it is one of the earliest and primitive symbols that men have ever used and Christianity was quick to seize upon its value. Christ is often represented as a Gardener and the "garden of the soul" is a phrase in common usage. Perhaps unconsciously these symbols have worked in O'Faolain's writing since his writing is essentially the mirroring of simple folk. Between their own gardens and Eden lies that of Gethsemani; but if the shadow of the Cross leaves a sense of guilt upon them it is much more taken for granted than it is in the characters of either Graham Greene or François Mauriac. The guilt is a birthright as opposed to something to which one is converted later. That is why in O'Faolain's novels there is a certain carefree happiness which is missing in the landscapes of Greene and Mauriac. In the stock sentence from Maynooth, "Ah! sure now! We drink the faith with our mothers' milk."

This again is the explanation of simple folk—and remember that the Irish clergy are largely recruited from the peasantry. Again one has another double image—this time the mother. Mother Earth and Mother Church: one thousand years bring little change to the shape of plough or cross. Yet looking abroad O'Faolain sees priests who wear the same habits and soutanes as they do in Maynooth and his own county Cork, but they are men who have changed with the centuries; they know the conditions of modern industry as well as they know their breviaries. However, in Ireland because it has remained "a backwater of the Faith," these changes have made little effect; the country remains rural and because the position of the Church has never been questioned, the unquestioning unanimous acceptance of her sovereignty has fostered an impression of time standing still. Eternity has been pitted against emancipation. Emancipation has meant exile, a turning of one's back on a demi-paradise because in "the emerald isle" one can only worship Mother Earth if one worships Mother Church since nationalism and Catholicism have become synonymous. This is well brought out in O'Faolain's last novel

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to date, *Come Back to Erin* (1940). At first headstrong and defiant, the hero leaves; but Ireland calls to the wanderer and it is a call that cannot be denied. He returns married, but because he has married out of the Church he finds that he must either desert his wife or both his Church and country. The dilemma proves too much. St. John Hogan-Hannafey commits suicide.

In the context such an ending seems the only plausible one; it is far from sentimental because O'Faolain is not a sentimental author. In his biography of Newman—called *Newman's Way* (1952)—he writes of a Carlo Dolci flight of embarrassing sentiment when the preacher declares that "so intense was the Virgin's love of God that it drew Him out of Heaven into her womb" (!). Greatly as he admires the Cardinal, he remains an acute critic. In fact during his twenty-five years of writing his style has undergone several changes so that during the 'thirties in the *Left Review* one finds him bursting out—"For the love of Mike cut loose from this fixation that the artist can no longer have the guts to be what every artist has always been—an *individualist*." But the He-Man Tarzan period was short lived and he returned to a more frolicksome, gentler prose—the prose of his first book. "To live long is to change often." Newman's shadow falls over the whole O'Faolain corpus; like a moth it beats about the flickering candle—or is it that moth is none other than "J.H.N. . . . that brave, kind, solitary, gifted tormented angel"? Once more one finds the note of whimsicality, but with the whimsicality there is an abiding truth—a truth in the writer's fiction that has been lent strength by his realistic studies of O'Neill, Daniel O'Donnell, and de Valera. For here once more a binding note is to be found in Newman—an answer to the Irish Censorship Board and a link between Eden and Gethsemani: "One cannot attempt a sinless literature of sinful man."

Strange Voyages: Coleridge and Rimbaud

BY MOTHER MARY ELEANOR, S.H.C.J.

THE voyage-symbol is an ancient and ubiquitous one, expressing something permanent and fundamental in human experience; yet the exact nature of the experience and the method by which it is conveyed vary with the literary period, the temperament of the poet, and the spiritual climate which surrounds him. A comparison, therefore, of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" and Rimbaud's "Bateau ivre" yields interesting observations concerning the romantic and the symbolist vision and method of poetic statement.

Similarities arise, of course, out of the nature of the controlling symbol and the close correspondence in poetic materials. What Purchas and Bartram did for Coleridge, Chateaubriand did for Rimbaud; and a similar fecundity of imagination transformed these materials, in both cases, into a strange, inchoate mass of the exotic and the fabulous, sometimes linked to geographic names, but belonging to the seas and continents of inner consciousness. What laudanum did for Coleridge, alcohol and a deliberate immersion in sensation did for Rimbaud, in breaking down the barriers between conscious and unconscious mental activity. Rimbaud elevated this feature of his experience to a central place in his aesthetic theory. It is hardly necessary to quote his well-known statement: "The poet makes himself a *visionary* through a long, immense and reasoned *derangement* of all the senses."

Both poets had a need to impose some order on the disordered quality of their inner experience and some awareness that this order must be achieved through suffering. This spiritual process constitutes their voyage, and the central voyage-symbol, partly by a host of subsidiary symbols which do a double work of furnishing setting and reinforcing meaning. But there is an interesting contrast in the way the symbolic meaning is related to the narrative framework. There seems on a first reading to be little in common between the clearly articulated story-line of the ballad-like "Ancient Mariner" and the loosely constructed sequence of symbols, distorted images, and strange juxtapositions which constitute the outer surface of the "Bateau ivre." In fact, at first sight the term "narrative" seems hardly to apply to Rimbaud's poem. What impresses one is the violent confusion of images which depict Rimbaud's sea and the rather surrealist incongruity of a drunken ship telling about its voyages. Yet hidden beneath the images there is narrative, startlingly poignant and direct, if one knows where to look for it. It is carried by a series of verbs

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which move at regular intervals through the poem, but which are so overlaid by images as to be at first concealed; "Je descendais," "Je cours," "J'ai dansé"—they go down the page, recording enchantment, disenchantment, despair, hope mounted above despair—the story of a soul, the soul, it may be, of the young Rimbaud, and by extension, the soul of any inebriated spirit, on whatever level its intoxications may occur.

If Rimbaud's poem hides directness under complexity, Coleridge's poem hides complexity under simplicity. The very directness of story-line, the very overtness of stated moral, deceive one; and some readers never get above this level, as some never see the underlying narrative framework of Rimbaud's poem. Both poems make large demands on their readers to complete the meaning, and their similar reliance on symbolism unites their seeming contrasts in technique.

THE point of view employed in the narration offers another interesting comparison. Both poems deal with the odyssey of a soul, and the use of the first-person narrative reinforces the dramatic character of the experience. Yet it is more than a mere literary perversity that identifies Rimbaud's protagonist with the ship itself, as it is more than mere narrative that causes Coleridge to insert his first-person story in a third-person envelope. These devices are central to the symbolic import of the poems.

Rimbaud's figure of the drunken ship is itself a most suggestive symbol. By selecting the inanimate and endowing it with a strange, autonomous life of its own and a kind of pathetic intelligence, and then further perverting the symbol by making it a drunken intelligence, he renders the figure powerful. There is the sense of superimposed planes of being which should normally be quite separate; and the effect is similar to modern abstract painting, built up on intersecting planes. It is a restless, distorted symbol, suggestive of the experience it symbolizes. Yet curiously enough, though the symbol is sustained throughout unbroken, it is sufficiently transparent so that the human nature it symbolizes shines through. A kind of sympathetic rapport is established between the reader and the drunken little boat as it proceeds through its strange experiences. Toward the end, it is the naked soul beneath the envelope which elicits pity and receives it.

Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" invites fear along with pity. By introducing the Wedding Guest, the spirits which converse as they hover above the ship, the Hermit, the Pilot and the Pilot's Boy, he exposes his theme to a variety of reflecting surfaces, introducing it, as it were, into a room of many mirrors, extending it and refracting it into that complexity which has been already remarked. Moreover, his is, in a way, a double image—of both mariner and ship; for the ship, along with the man, bears the mark of its experience. But

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the ship is a thing of death, bearing corpses on its decks. It must be destroyed before the man can be freed. There is here a further possibility of symbolic amplification, if one chooses to follow it through. Most critics do not do so; but Coleridge's biographer, Fausset, looking for a comparison for Coleridge seeking sanctuary at Highgate, finds it, not in the ancient mariner, but in his ship—"a wreck with warped planks and sear sails." It is a similar picture to the *bateau ivre*, reduced, in the end, to a *bateau perdu*, coming at last into harbor.

"The Ancient Mariner" is the odyssey of a soul suffering the penalties of an isolated act. The whole of nature, and forces and powers that are above nature, participate in these penalties. His voyage is a social one and his act has social consequences which are not repaired by his personal repentance and expiation. The mariner on a rotting deck, turning from the curse in dead men's eyes to look on a rotting sea, is a perfect symbol for this sort of ordeal. The spiritual situation symbolized by the "Bateau ivre" is a somewhat different one. It is the odyssey of a soul which deliberately sets out to rid itself of protective restraints. At first it gives itself joyously to its "maritime awakening." Only gradually does it experience the deepening unrest that culminates in despair. The drunken ship is the perfect symbol for this type of experience, embodying that de-humanization which such a course must ultimately produce. Homer's Ulysses was in full control of his ship—perhaps never more so than when he lashed himself to the mast to escape the Sirens. Coleridge's mariner starts his voyage outside the help of nature. Even when expiation has been accomplished, his ship moves by supernatural forces, not by his own craft. Rimbaud's mariner has entirely disappeared; the boat itself has taken over. The abdication of man's responsible powers is complete.

BOTH the "Ancient Mariner" and the "Bateau ivre" are susceptible to particular and general meanings, and can be made to pertain, on successive levels, to the ordeal of the artist and of the man. It is in accord with Coleridge's reliance on the intuition of the romantic transcendentalist that his mariner lies trance-like while other forces, not arising from the natural laws of navigation, propel his ship. It coincides with his ideas regarding the relation of the poet to external nature that the same water-snakes which at one moment constitute his torment, in the next moment, after his own attitude has changed, confer release. It is equally in harmony with his ideas that the pivotal blessing of the snakes which furnishes the turning-point is performed by the mariner "unawares." Hence, as Stallknecht points out in his treatment of Wordsworth in *Strange Seas of Thought*, the "Ancient Mariner," read on this level, connects with "Dejection, An Ode," and with "The Prelude."

Similarly, as has been already asserted, "Rimbaud's theory of poetry, empha-

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sizing the role of poet as *voyant* and relying on an abandonment of reason in favor of the *rêve*, achieved through a derangement of the senses, is implicit in his symbol. The little drunken *bateau*, having cast out protective restraints and external controls under the figure of crew and rudder, tastes first an exultation of release. "J'ai dansé," one reads, in that series of significant verbs that describes the inner action of the poem. Then comes the languor of the *rêve*. Verbs of knowing and seeing follow: "*Je sais*"; "*J'ai vu*"; "*J'ai rêvé*." The sirens are at work, those parti-colored, phosphorescent chanteurs which symbolize the derangement of the senses. The yellows and blues *sing*; it is a *black* perfume which the twisted trees on the banks exhale. But those same deranged senses which were intended to minister to the artist destroy the spiritual integrity of the man. The lurid seas of Rimbaud's poem, the shifting colors, the alternating calms and tempests, the threatening headlands of incredible Floridas, the rotting Leviathan, the Behemoth in the heat of mating, not only almost wreck the ship, but prove unfavorable to vision. What threatens the man threatens also the artist. It is significant that whereas the central ordeal in Coleridge's poem comes from a terrible and tormenting calm, that in Rimbaud's is gathered up into a reverberating maelstrom. Coleridge's dead lie still upon the deck, torturing the thirst-tortured mariner with the curse in their silent eyes. Rimbaud's wan bodies of the drowned float amid the scum of flowers, and the eyes that torment the battered ship are manifold and nightmarish—the silly eyes of the great lanterns in the lighthouses, which should be comforting eyes and are not, the eyes of panthers, the eyes of the sea, the eyes of the great hulks in the harbor.

IN both poems, beauties mingle with the horrors and are a part of the horror because they are a part of the disorder. Color is used to reinforce the symbolism. Even here, Coleridge's colors are static, Rimbaud's are dynamic; Coleridge's sea burns a still and awful red; Rimbaud's greens and blues are constantly being fermented into the bitter rednesses of love. Everywhere Coleridge's images work steadily and pitilessly to one effect—a devastating impotence; Rimbaud's will not let one rest. Yet out of his forcible distortions and sinuous intertwining there comes a sudden synthesis—the synthesis of a terrible perception of a disordered universe; not disordered in itself, but in being refracted through man's own disordered faculties.

It is Coleridge the artist, by a sudden shift of vision, who puts Coleridge the man on the way to restoration, if one may venture to read the poem on the personal level. Or, taken more generally, a reawakened intuition puts man back into harmony with his universe and on the route to salvation. It is Rimbaud the man who must be saved before the artist regains his vision. The turning-point in the poem comes when the ship, beaten and broken by the *clapote*-

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ments furieux which have been making havoc with it, is finally reduced to *martyr lassé des pôles et des zones*, and comes to rest *ainsi qu'une femme à genoux*. The turning-point in Coleridge's poem is from torpid stillness to motion; in Rimbaud's it is from furious movement to rest. Yet in neither case is relief complete in the first moments of reversal. But action-verbs are replaced by participles in the verbal framework of Rimbaud's poem. The boat is *taché, jeté, monté*; it knows itself to be *bateau perdu*. It is now *carcasse ivre* which the Monitors and sailmakers of the Hanseatic towns would not bother to fish up out of the sea.

It is a knowledge of external beauty in nature that begins the restoration of the ancient mariner; it is a knowledge of its own lost state that provides the turning-point in the voyage of the *bateau ivre*. It turns its back on the headlands of its fabulous America and longs for the ancient parapets of Europe. The finite verbs return, carrying their story of revulsion, of despair, of longing: "*Je regrette, "J'ai vu, "J'ai pleuré.*" Finally the indicative mode gives away to the exclamatory in a cry of utter weariness: "*Oh, que ma quille éclate! Oh, que j'aïlle à la mer!*" The desire is for complete annihilation. Yet presently a contrary verb appears, in a conditional context: "*Si je désire . . .*" A sudden vision opens up, an image that remains, but one that seems very hard to attain. The Europe that it longs for summons up the image, sober and quiet, of a little child at dawn, leaning intently over a small dark pool, sailing a toy boat. It is hard to imagine a symbol so calculated to restore lost values as this darling and deceptively simple figure of the child; yet it is a rather austere symbol, too. The littleness of both the child and the pool is the answer to the puffed up pride. The pool's cold darkness is the antidote to the mad, monstrous, over-colored sea. The child's rather sad intentness is the corrective to the insouciant irresponsibility of the drunken ship. It is so perfect a symbol that the figure of a child was chosen to define in Christian revelation what must be the quality of a soul when it is ready for the Kingdom of Heaven. Rimbaud eschews all Christian symbolism; Coleridge loads his poem with the religious neo-Gothic trappings of medieval Catholicism. Yet Coleridge's poem remains romantic and Rimbaud's, written from a dimly-remembered but discarded Catholicism, rises in spite of him to a Christian answer.

WE have seen that the salvation of the artist in Coleridge's poem is carried by the reversal of the mariner's attitude toward the water-snakes. The salvation of the man does not come till almost the end of the poem—not until he is shriven by the hermit; and even then he does not achieve peace. The old sailor with his trembling hand, his glittering eye, and his recurring need to unburden himself of his story, is the symbol, it may be, of expiation, but not of true restoration. Perhaps this is because he has not had enough to do with

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his own destiny. He is the victim of a throw of dice; his own will has never been sufficiently involved. His final rescue comes to him in a state of trance.

The *bateau ivre*, too, does not reach its little dark pool within the compass of the poem. It arrives at the harbor, but it cannot cut across the hulks of the great ships. But it recognizes that the failure is in its own will. Its final cry is "*Je ne puis plus.*" It is the failure of the artist and of the man. Yet there is not a finality about this failure. The ultimate triumph of the artist is pre-figured by a series of symbols which occur at intervals during the poem. They are all, in various contexts, symbols of birds. The first of these birds to appear in the poem are doves, and they come quite early in the voyage. Stanza seven ends with the fermented bitter rednesses of love. Stanza eight begins with skies bursting in light, waterspouts, surf, tides. Then the brilliance is dimmed; the tempo slackens. "I know the evening," exclaims the poet. Then comes the exquisite, pellucid image: "the dawn lifted up like a host of doves." The phrase is quiet, unadorned, but it rises on wings. Unmistakably *noumenal* in connotation, it perfectly captures those sudden moments of illumination which come occasionally even in the midst of sensuous excitements. Yet to make its reference unmistakable, the poet equates it with vision—vision of a very special quality: "*Et j'ai vu quelque fois que l'homme a cru voir.*"

The doves disappear and do not return, but other birds take their place as the narrative of sensual disorder progresses. When the narrative reaches its peak and despair clamors loudest, scolding birds with pale eyes come flocking to the ship, casting their quarrels and their dung over the deck. It is in the next stanza that the boat shifts from *bateau ivre* to *bateau perdu* and in that moment the boat is thrown up into *birdless air*—"l'éther sans oiseau." Some phrases have power to evoke whole layers of emotional response. This birdless air is such an image, heavy with connotations of fear, desolation and death. One can imagine it as characterizing some desolate, lost region in Dante's hell. But once the *bateau perdu* has turned at last toward its lost Europe, the birds mysteriously reappear, transformed. They are "*millions d'oiseaux d'or,*" and they are equated in the poem with the promise of future powers, of a *future vigueur*. These golden birds are less austere, less moving, as symbols than the host of doves lifted up; but that is not unfitting. For art is less austere than contemplation. These golden birds are adequate symbol for the fructifying of dried or contaminated artistic power. They carry one level of meaning in the poem.

The child, too, who, squatting by his pool, appears as a symbol of the salvation of the man, occurs as the climax to a series of children who are carrying the other basic theme of the poem. Children first appear early in the poem, but they are only accessory to the main structure, occurring in similes. But

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these similes have to do with the attitude of the boat toward its projected adventure and are therefore important in carrying meaning. They are not very nice children, though very human ones. They are deaf to what they do not wish to hear and take a naughty joy in the sweet sourness of stolen apples. They present the defects, not the virtues, of childhood, and help to define that *humana natura* which lies inebriated and unleashed beneath the symbol of the *bateau ivre*.

Their next rather incidental appearance is in stanza fifteen, yet here too they reinforce the transformations which are taking place within the poem. Suddenly, in the midst of all its monstrous visions, the *bateau* looks down into blue water and sees a sight that is gay, whimsical, good. It sees swordfish, singing fish, gold fish, and it would like to point them out to children. Children are full of wonder; they can be counted on to respond. The childish is giving way here to the childlike, in preparation for the final vision of the pool. So that the image may not be passed over without notice, the poet endows it, like the image of the doves, with a noetic quality: ". . . for an instant, *ineffable winds have winged me.*" This detail bears a faint resemblance to the blessing of the water-snakes in the "Ancient Mariner," but unlike the other incident, it provides no turning-point. Rimbaud is not writing from the viewpoint of romantic transcendentalism, like Coleridge, and only the image of the child and the pool is adequate to carry the metaphysical meaning of his poem to its conclusion. It is the beauty of this poem that such a vision is posited, and its tragedy that it is left unattained. Yet the message it carries is sound, sounder than the message of the other narrative, and that image, hovering in the mind, is more convincing than the mariner's frenzied tale.]

IN bringing this comparison to a conclusion, it might be suggestive to introduce into the picture one more sea-symbol dealing with the theme of regeneration—the drowned Phoenician sailor in T. S. Eliot's "Waste Land." Eliot has gone a step beyond Rimbaud, as Rimbaud went beyond Coleridge, in departing from narrative in favor of symbol. No one symbol dominates Eliot's poem, as the *bateau ivre* dominated Rimbaud's. The Phoenician sailor is only one symbol among many, albeit a pivotal one. The theme of regeneration is present, not by any narrative statement, but by an ambivalence in the symbols themselves. The same water which drowned the sailor can become the water of regeneration. Death too is ambivalent. If he has gone to the wrong kind of death, there is no hope for him; but there is another kind of death, and he can serve as a symbol of that too—the death which brings life. Thus he comprises in himself layers of meaning. Perhaps it is precisely because the protagonists in Coleridge's and Rimbaud's poems never quite tasted this second type of death

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Hopkins and Welsh Prosody

BY ROBERT O. BOWEN

FOR the past several years the growing academic interest in Gerard Manley Hopkins has led to frequent mention of the Welsh influence on his prosody. W. H. Gardner examines the problem at some length in his two volume *Gerard Manley Hopkins; the Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorian* contain a great deal of this branch of Hopkinsiana, and similar material is to be found in many scattered articles and introductions. However, in all of this, poetic purpose has been largely overlooked; thus the cause of much of the similarity has been obscured. The case is a peculiar one and demands attention, for it is rare that poetries of such diverse source have ultimately developed such like form.

The real poetic source in Hopkins was a manner of thought which can be described as Scotist. Hopkins had discovered in himself a rather loose Scotism before coming on Duns Scotus and found in the great Scholastic his own thought elaborately formalized. He was aware of this philosophy in himself as early as 1872; therefore, since it is poetic attitude that ultimately molds style, one can hardly ascribe Hopkins' technique in the main to Welsh metrics when it is also known that he was not familiar with Welsh until he went to St. Beuno in the fall of 1874.

The pre-Welsh alliteration of Hopkins does not resemble the Welsh as much as the Anglo-Saxon, which recalls the poet's frequent preoccupation with Langland. Alliterative units from Hopkins' fragments of *Pilate* produced between 1864 and 1866 ("And in a bason bring the blocks") assume the *Piers Plowman* hemistich form. Examples of internal rime from *Pilate* ("This outer cold, my exile from of old" and "Does lay men low with one blade's sudden blow") resembled the forms of Poe's "Raven" in which a listener marks two verses though the format designates but one. In Welsh prosody internal rime involves two syllables near the middle of the line, never the last two syllables in the line; and it must lock the line together, never split it as in the Hopkins samples above.

In the *Pilate* fragment, then, there is much that Hopkins certainly did not borrow from the Welsh alliterative devices known as *cynghanedd*. Yet in this same poem, written years before his brief Welsh studies, he produced patterns which approximate *sain*, the supreme form of *cynghanedd*. "Often when winds impenitent," for example, parallels the *sain* of the twelfth century *Gogynfeirdd* bard in *Llys lleufer ynys gury's gorfyndawd*. In both of the above further parallel complications are added to the pattern. It would not be

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absurd to argue that Hopkins had developed an unrefined *cynghanedd* independently of the Welsh. His patterns do not, at any rate, resemble the later Welsh poetic forms, which it is known that he did study very briefly, but rather the inchoate forms developed by the early *Gogynfeirdd*. The presence of the random samples above, produced at the early date cited, indicates that far from having taken his technique from the Welsh more or less in full as is generally suggested, Hopkins merely found there, as he had previously found in Duns Scotus, fulfillment of himself.

CYNGHANEDD is eminently suited to the pure vowelism of Welsh, which allows it to avoid the preponderance such an alliterative pattern assumes in English, and which many listeners object to in Hopkins. This distinct vowelism gives Welsh the chime so often attributed to it; and it is the chiming in complex alliterative patterns that creates in verse written in *cynghanedd* the peculiar impression of a single complex stroke of poetry rather than a sequential utterance.

In order to fill a pattern of such complexity and to include sense in it, the Welsh bard had to search carefully for perceptions that would fill his need. The form intensified thought, forced fine and complex insight into verse, and caused, among other things, that jeweling of Welsh poetry with compounds which, because of their coupling of qualities, add to the poetry a vocabulary of multiple perceptions. Each rule and license of the highly stylized *cynghanedd* pattern furthered the perceptive immediacy in Welsh poetry. The original intent of the *Gogynfeirdd* was, however, solely ornamental; and this new and perhaps highest quality of their verse was a side-effect resulting from the search for combined sound and sense.

Where the *Gogynfeirdd* bards sought ornament alone, it was to the quality of complex immediacy in alliteration that Hopkins was attracted. The ornamentation, though not separable from the stroke of the verse, was not of itself important to his needs, and was in fact foreign to his somewhat ascetic nature. Hopkins' demand for a palimpsest rather than a sequential communication rises from the *inscapes* which he sought to convey. These were immediate and total impressions caught by a stroke of sudden and complex accuracy of vision. The ultimate source of his search for a suitable measure, which he later found parallels to in Welsh verse, was the *individuation* of Duns Scotus, the Scholastic. Hopkins wanted a measure that would allow him to express a perception of the *thisness* of a thing at once, since in the Scotist theory of individuation *thisness* is not an enumerated quality but an essence and cannot be arrived at by enumeration.

IN his long search through English and Greek prosody Hopkins was unable to locate a form that would allow consistently that complex immediacy

which he developed in his own alliterative experiments and eventually discovered counterparts to in the Welsh. The particularity of his need is attested to in that, though he assumed something resembling the Welsh forms, his poetry is in a tradition quite apart from the Welsh. This is most marked in the intense personal passion of his work, which would be construed as a serious flaw by the Welsh in whose poetry there is an essential anonymity. Furthermore, the conscious religiosity of Hopkins' poetry is disparate to the traditional Welsh antagonism between priest and bard.

The stylistic resemblances of Hopkins' poetry to that of the Welsh bard does not end with alliterative schemes but is strongly marked in his catalogues, which often take the form of the Welsh *dyfalu*, a type of metaphor best translated as "comparison making." The third coda of his "That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire" typifies this: "I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and / This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond, / Is immortal diamond."

The aesthetic difference between *dyflu* and the English catalogue as found in Whitman and others is that *dyfalu* progressively blends essences of many metaphors to form one complex impression; whereas a Whitman catalogue usually consists of an enumerated series of figures, the contemplation of which leads to an appreciation of a mass. The impression created by the former is like that of a liquid blended of inseparable elements; the latter conveys more the notion of a conglomerate of solids, each of which retains some entity within the mass. The *dyfalu* mechanism, then, though there is little reason to believe that Hopkins got it from the Welsh, was highly suitable to his Scottish attitude.

It is pertinent that the Hopkins-Bridges correspondence deals in part with Whitman to whom Hopkins admitted a rhythmic similarity. It would seem that if Hopkins were aware of a source of his catalogues in the Welsh, he would have offered it in this correspondence to clarify his lack of influence by Whitman, whom he objected to on doctrinal grounds. In fact, the dearth of commentary in Hopkins' letters and notebooks on Welsh forms suggests that he was not aware that he was influenced by the Welsh other than in alliteration. Even this last he does not state but merely suggests by having hashed together, from Spurrell's primitive dictionary, one short Welsh poem, which according to the strict rules of *cynghanedd* was a failure.

ANOTHER stylistic device which appears in Hopkins and has precise counterpart in Welsh poetry is the advanced parenthesis of the type found in "Tom's Garland":

. . . lustily he his low lot (feel
That ne'er need hunger, Tom; Tom seldom sick
Seldom heartsore; that treads through, prickproof, thick

Notes on Robert Lowell

BY DESALES STANDERWICK

BEAUTY is practically indefinable, and readers of Robert Lowell's two volumes of poetry may have asked themselves, "Where is the beauty in the harsh turbulence of *Lord Weary's Castle*? How can the themes of incest and suicide in *Mills of the Kavanaughs* be termed 'beautiful'?" But beauty is there, and such readers should be persuaded to dip further, to re-read, to ponder, in order to perceive it.

Few attempts have been made to get at the foundations of his poetry, what Lowell himself might call "the tap-root." The most satisfactory and inclusive work has been done by a poet one year older than Lowell, Randall Jarrell, in his *Poetry and the Age*. Mr. Jarrell sees in Lowell a dichotomy: the struggle between self and selflessness; between constriction and expansion; between cold and warmth; between evil and good; between Satan the Serpent and Christ. All that is good is to be found in Christ, "Lamb of the shepherds," "the blue kingfisher," "Child of blood," "Jonas Messias," "wanderer and child," "the risen Jesus," "the Man-Fisher," "the sudden Bridegroom," "Is," "the dove of Jesus." In these epithets, some of which are hardly traditional, Lowell is coping with and overcoming the problem that faced T. S. Eliot and other poets who have attempted serious religious verse dealing with the spiritual crises of our times. Lowell's descriptions of the Christ Who will save "this ferris wheel" spinning in these "weak-kneed roots" are so in tune with the mood, imagery, and movement of his poems that there can be no shuddering at them.

Absolute, sweeping divisions in the poetry of Robert Lowell would be misleading because the poems often treat of several or all of Lowell's enigmas. For the sake of convenience one can divide Lowell's subject-matter into the sea, death, war, Boston and money, and religion, bearing in mind that often these are interfused. Of sea poems "The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket" is acknowledged to be his best. "At the Indian Killer's Grave" is about death. "Napoleon Crosses the Berezina" is a representative war poem. "As a Plane Tree by the Water" strikes against greed and landed-interests. "Where the Rainbow Ends" centers about Boston towards which Lowell's feelings are, to say the least, strange. On the subject of religion, which ordinarily brings to Lowell's mind Calvinism and Puritanism, "Mother Marie Therese" should be studied, a poem which has been compared to Hopkins' *Wreck of the Deutschland*.

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"THE Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket," a kind of elegy in memory of Warren Winslow, dead at sea, is divided into seven parts. The parts deal mostly with the cruel sea. The language is bitter and searing; the only exception is the sixth section entitled, "Our Lady of Walsingham," where the gentleness and ease of the words are appropriate to his subject.

It is night in a violent sea which throws up a drowned sailor who then is, not thrown back, but buried in the sea. The sea is powerful and has wrought its evils on the sailor who was "matted head and marble feet," nothing but a "botch of reds and whites." The serious tenor of the poem is enforced by the reference to fated Ahab's "void and forehead." The poet addresses the sailors who buried the corpse, and all sailors who have foolishly tried to "sand-bag this Atlantic bulwark"; when the sucking sea takes, it does not give back. Not even the lute of the Thracian Orpheus could make the Atlantic release its hold on the thousands of Eurydices it has taken unto itself.

The poet then brings us to shore where the winds coming in from the sea bespeak disaster, and tell us of a broken Pequod. The winds are birds whose "wings beat upon the stones," who "scream for you, Cousin," whose claws try to throttle the life out of the sea. In the Quaker graveyard where the poet is meditating, "the bones / Cry out . . . for the hurt beast," for the whale over which man was given dominion by the Lord God.

In the third part, there is again a direct address to the poet's cousin, Warren Winslow. Nothing we gain from the sea is of any avail or any value. There are some human powers, like guns, which can "roil the salt and sand"; but the sea lives with another time, the kind of time whose "contrition blues" and destroys and removes all traces of the havoc it has wrought. We may dream of the "castles in Spain," but the drowned learn only of the Ville d'Is, a city fabled to have been submerged because of the King's wicked daughter. The poet ends with the bitter irony of the poor Quakers relying on God's help while the very "monster's slick" carries them down to the depths of the sea.

Section four could well be an eloquent epilogue to *Moby Dick*. The end of "snatching at straws," of sailing the seas, hunting whales, fighting the unknown and the untameable, is only bitterness. We cry from the depths, says the poet, echoing the lament of King David in the Psalms. When the sea has done its full work, it leaves "only the death-rattle of the crabs." How like human life is this, the life of man fighting the sea; "we are poured out like water;" and King David had continued, "and all my bones are scattered." David had begun this terrible song of woe with the words immortalized later by a crucified Christ: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The fifth part fills in a rather accurate description of a dismembered and decaying whale on the beach. It is said that there is nothing to equal the

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smell of a whale town where "the roll / Of its corruption overruns this world." In the pit of the dead, the decayed bones of the slain cry vengeance on the white whale, Moby Dick, and the sea that destroyed them. The whale fights on relentlessly till its dying gasp. Life struggles on, in man and beast; in man, the struggle is misdirected, so that the poet prays at the end, "Hide, / Our steel, Jonas Messias, in Thy side," a line complicated because of its allusions. We need a Saviour, Who is the Messias; and because of our interminable struggle against the white whale of evil, we call Him a Jonas Messias. As Jonas entered a whale's belly for three days and emerged safely, so our Messias and Saviour will enter the belly of the earth, the land of the dead, and in three days will emerge victorious and triumphant over life's most fearful event. Our steel that He hides in His side may well be the lance that will bring forth water and blood on Calvary, announcing the consummation of our Redemption.

It is here that the poet introduces a section seemingly foreign to the poem: "Our Lady of Walsingham." Not only is the locale changed from the New England coast to England, but it has its own title, and is an apostrophe to Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer, whose shrine at the Carmelite Monastery of Walsingham in Norfolk, England, had been the most popular shrine to Mary in pre-Reformation days until it was destroyed in the year 1538. The hard, bitter language is gone, the hopelessness of life is gone. "Shiloah's whirlpools gurgle and make glad / The Castle of God. Sailor, you were glad / And whistled Sion by that stream." The lines resemble Milton's introduction to *Paradise Lost*: "Or, if Sion hill / Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed / Fast by the oracle of God." The poet sees no beauty in the Shrine's statue of our Lady; he applies to Mary Isaias' words about the Messias: "There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness;" the new sorrow for Mary is, "Not Calvary's Cross nor crib at Bethlehem" but her dethronement from Walsingham and the heart of England. But the poet sees great hope that, not only England as once, but "the world shall come to Walsingham" to reap the fruits of the redemption and salvation wrought by "our steel, Jonas Messias, in Thy side."

This hope contrasts sharply and sadly with the ominous words of the last line in part seven. The Atlantic is once again invoked as destroyer and corrupter, "fouled with the blue sailors." If you could fathom the mysterious depths of the sea, you would find yourself watching God in the act of creation, for the sea is the most elemental being in the universe. But even then, in the dawn of being, the "blue-lung'd combers lumbered to the kill." And the poet's musings upon this untamed monster makes him say: "The Lord survives the rainbow of His will." The Book of Genesis relates how God made a covenant with Noe after the destructive flood: "I will set my bow in the clouds,

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and it shall be the sign of a covenant between me, and between the earth." The rainbow is the sign of hope and salvation; but if we do not fulfill our part of the covenant, the Lord will "render to every man according to his deeds." Thus the poem ends on a dire note with the threat that Ahab's fate may be our own if the monster overtakes us.

IN "At the Indian Killer's Grave" the poet meditates upon death as he looks in King's Chapel Burying Ground where the first stone is marked 1658. In the last stanza he tells us that "I ponder on the railing at this park"; it is a down-sloping piece of burial ground, set in the middle of Boston, hemmed in by the street, the chapel, business blocks, and the city hall. He opens his meditation by saying that what is now left of the dead and their graves is a visible link from this world to the world of the spirit, to the great valley of Jehoshaphat where "I," the Lord, "will sit to judge all nations round about, . . . in the valley of destruction." Will things be reversed in that valley of true judgment? Will King Philip, great Indian chief of the slaughtered Wampanaogs, plait (get ready for the scalping?) the hair of these buried men, once considered heroic for their war against the Indians? "Friends" the poet calls these dead, who are so close to the roaring Boston subway. Death is an engraver, whose impressions are final and everlasting. (Could Lowell be punning on the word *engraver*: one who puts others into a grave?) These dead are forced by death to enter the dangerous valley and face the Lord's judgments.

This cemetery is not a pleasant spot, with its "dusty leaves and frizzled lilacs." So dreary is it that it seems as though the dust of the dead and the off-scourings of the town have blended. Charles II and England come upon the scene when in 1646, a petition praying for the privilege of Episcopal worship in King's Chapel was made to the King. Now "strangers hold the golden State house dome," for it used to be a common opinion that the Chapel Burying Ground contained only the bodies of Episcopalians. Among the remains the poet can see the tomb of John and Mary Winslow; John Winslow was the brother of Governor Edward Winslow; John's wife, Mary Chilton, was one of the *Mayflower* passengers. What is perhaps of more interest: Major Thomas is buried in this graveyard; he was one of the commanders in King Philip's War, and probably stands for the Indian Killer of whom Lowell speaks.

A subway train, envious perhaps of the dead, passes near. Changes come irrevocably; can the headstones marshal the dead to fight with the dragon that began its work in Genesis and continued straight through to the Apocalypse and beyond? In a terrifying picture, Lowell has the severed head of the Indian King Philip speak to the living. His head had in reality been cut off and hung in a prominent place to be mocked. The substance of his words is that

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the "Judgment is at hand"; that high-sounding and pretty speeches about religious election will not save the dead from the judgment. "The dead hand of time" is too relentless, too exacting.

Entering this man-hole (grave) you no longer give orders; you only receive. The surrounding buildings try to prevent the spread of the graveyard which is well-kept externally; but the mouse cracking walnuts by the headstones reemphasizes what the graveyard is and is meant to be.

The last stanza is the most difficult one in the poem. The poet reflects on what he has seen. The men lying in the graves were possibly "fabulous or fancied patriarchs." They built a kingdom for their heirs, but sowed only dragon's teeth which would sprout up armed men to slay them. The poet then calls upon the four evangelists to take him to the Garden where Mary overcomes the Devil or dragon previously mentioned. The scene parallels somewhat the first half of the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse in which the dragon fights the woman and her seed. Up to this point, the poem's attitude has been one of hostility and fear towards death; but when Christ the Bridegroom enters quickly, death is no more, for Christ has vanquished it.

BENEATH the title, "Napoleon Crosses the Berezina," Lowell has inscribed Christ's words: "Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (*Matthew: 24, 18*). Christ is here speaking of the Last Day. War is like the end of the world. All wars are alike; to express continuity, the poet depicts Napoleon as "Charlemagne's stunted shadow." Dreaming dreams, Napoleon marched into Russia, which will contain for him only "tombstone steppes." In 1812, Napoleon was retreating from Moscow; in November of that year, the Russian forces attacked him as he was crossing the Berezina River. Tremendous losses were inflicted upon the would-be conqueror. At that same river, in July, 1941, a fierce battle raged while the Germans were marching on Smolensk. Again, we get that sense of continuity of history. The poet calls upon the God of the "dragonish, unfathomed waters" to come up and wreak havoc on this war-monger. The river cannot chew up the bridges; but it is just as effectively changing them into tumbrels, the wicked, little carts that led the condemned Frenchmen to the guillotine during the Revolution. Add to the river the paralyzing snow and Napoleon's journey becomes truly "carrion-miles to Purgatory."

When war becomes a favorite pastime of leaders and nations, then really "we are poured out like water," we are wasted, we are condemned. It only remains for the eagles to hover over the place where the bodies shall be. Nor does Robert Lowell assuage the harsh tenor of his words, for war has stalked its prey too long and too doggedly.

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THE title of the poem "As a Plane Tree by the Water" is taken from the book of Ecclesiasticus. There are Biblical overtones throughout. "Darkness has called to darkness" comes from the Psalms; the Psalm's theme is nature's splendor proclaiming the glory of god, and the purity of God's Law. But the message is reversed in the poem; darkness here bespeaks a knowledge of evil in a land like the ancient Babel where wicked pride brought God's curse and the confusion of tongues. The new Babel is Boston, and money is the besetting evil. The cursed city is in "a land / Of preparation" dedicated to the Blessed Mother of God. As Walsingham had its Lady shrine, so Boston becomes Babylon, and Mary "Our Lady of Babylon." The city once was Mary's chosen place but now it is crusted with flies, symbols of decay. It once had been "the apple of your eye."

The theme continues in the second stanza in which the poet hits directly at the ideologies which dream of perfect worlds, "floating cities," "tomorrow's city to the sun." But the sun shines endlessly on Boston's streets that seem to lead their walkers straight to hell; "And therefore I was weary of my life, when I saw that all things under the sun are evil, and all vanity and vexation of spirit." That same sun shall act as a sword against those who have held back from observing the Lord's injunctions.

The image in the last stanza is complex. The flies, whose name has echoed throughout the poem disastrously, try to strike from Boston across the sea, to the old country where money did not talk, but where "the eyes of Bernadette . . . saw Our Lady so squarely that / Her vision put out reason's eye." The darkness of Boston, engendered by too much planning and too much thinking, is helpless before the vision of this simple French girl. In the same way does Christ's victory over the tomb antagonize the people in the "floating cities" while it draws from the poet an ecstatic cry, "O walls of Jericho," as a symbol of the faith St. Paul speaks of: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had gone around them for seven days." In contrast to the talking money of Boston, the faith of the Jewish people directed them to consecrate all the gold and silver of Jericho to the Lord. And with this supernatural faith, the very streets of the heavenly kingdom are "singing to our Atlantic wall" of the central and most important truth of Christianity: the Resurrection. But in Boston, things are the same: "Flies, flies are on the plane tree, on the streets."

THE title of "Where the Rainbow Ends" is highly significant; Lowell used the rainbow in the "Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket." The rainbow again symbolizes God's hopeful covenant with man; but here, in a vision like St. John's in the Apocalypse ("I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God"), the poet sees the end of the rainbow in Boston,

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and God's justice existing beyond it. The poem is full of epithets for cold, symbolizing constriction and narrowness, greed and selfishness, Satan and evil: "winters," "winter," "whistle at the cold." Extreme barrenness wastes the land; even the just are in danger, for "The worms will eat deadwood to the foot / Of Ararat" where Noe landed after the flood. "Time and Death" move in against the life of the spirit; Judaism and Christianity "are withered"; a bridge spanning the Charles River makes an idle mockery out of God's promising rainbow. "Dead leaves" abound. The poet considers himself, like St. John, "a red arrow on this graph / Of Revelations." The doves, once bought and sacrificed to appease the Almighty, are exhausted. The evil times have destroyed the glorious rainbow, and the powers of darkness exult in this satanic world. As he is a red arrow, so the poet is a victim who expects to die on "the thorn tree." He ascends the altar and sings the praises of Christ the lion, Christ the lamb, Christ the beast, Who stands before the throne of Him Who said to Moses: "I am Who am." Overawed by the "gold / And a fair cloth," and the "wings" of the "dove of Jesus" beating his cheeks, he feels disappointment and calls himself an exile, one in a place where he does not belong. But just as a dove brought an olive branch to Noe on Mount Ararat, so the dove of Jesus brings the victim "an olive branch" of peace and holiness "to eat." The reference is, of course, to Christ's Body and Blood. "Both the old covenant and the new still hold, nothing has changed: here as they were and will be—says the poem—are life and salvation."

The structure of this poem deserves special mention. Its three stanzas are constructed alike: ten lines each, with the rhyme scheme: *abcbedeed*. Each line has ten syllables, save for the sixth which has six syllables; the rhymes are so arranged that only rereading discovers them.

A DRAMATIC poem, "Mother Marie Therese," is spoken in couplets by an aged "Canadian nun stationed in New Brunswick." She is sitting before a fire, "piling on more driftwood," and she thinks of her Mother Superior who had been drowned. The Mother Superior, well beloved by her subjects, had been an elegant woman who had tried to reconcile her elegance with the Lord's command: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But Mother Therese tried to straddle heaven and earth; the evil perhaps was not as great for herself as for the young sisters who felt "raptures for Mother." Mother's tastes were on the exquisite side: "strangled grouse / And snow-shoe rabbits;" "hounds;" "manor grounds;" "flowers and fowling pieces;" "Rabelais;" "*Action Française*," "Damascus shot-guns," "Hohenzollern emblems." She tried to give her charges the impression that one could hold on to the things of this world and still save one's soul.

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But God chastised her; she fell sick and decided to renounce her belongings. She only succeeded in half-renouncing them. Some time later, the Mother was drowned on an excursion, and the good subject, many years later, sorrows that the Mother had been deceived about life; or rather, that she had deceived herself. Lowell magnificently describes the Mother's resting-place:

The dead, the sea's dead, has her sorrows, hours
On end to lie tossing to the east, cold,
Without bedfellows, washed and bored and old,
Bilged by her thoughts, and worked on by the worms,
Until her fossil convent come to terms
With the Atlantic.

The concluding lines are beautiful but enigmatic. The burden of his argument seems to be that the good sisters who realized that all was "false, false and false," who feel sorrow when they recall "our young / Raptures for Mother," are like the tormented soul in the *Hound of Heaven*, fleeing from a God Who would bring them nothing but happiness. The sisters are "frost-bitten," "ruinous," freezing; more than physical, this cold is spiritual, in the soul. God is trying to master them but "we held our ears." "We must give ground," they cry out, "but it does not good." The speaker feels the nearness of Mother Therese trying to strengthen and enlighten her. But it is useless; "My mother's hollow sockets fill with tears" not made from the swells of the Atlantic.

Here again, the cold represents that constriction of the heart and soul that produces unselfishness and egotism, that refusal to listen to the voice of God. The speaker in the poem applies the evil universally, not only to the "snuffing crones / And cretins" of the convent. "Our world that shams / His New World, lost" is her condemnation of a civilization that is constricted through and through.

LOWELL'S most ambitious work is his narrative poem, *The Mills of the Kavanaughs*, which exhibits ease in its use of the open couplet. The narrative elements are slim; Anne Kavanaugh, not of royal New England stock, thinks about her blue-blooded husband who is dead. She relives certain events. After his return from World War II, Harry Kavanaugh was ill. Listening to his wife talking in her sleep, he came to the conclusion that she had been unfaithful to him. Angered, he tried to choke, but doesn't harm her. The realization of what she is increases the sickness in his mind until he tries to commit suicide, and finally ends up in an insane asylum where he dies.

The nightmares and dreams at times so interfuse with actual events and real memories that the direction the poet is talking seems vague and uncertain. The theme is again death and guilt and redemption. Death is too conclusive

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and exclusive: "Soon enough we saw / Death like the Bourbon after Waterloo, / Who learning and forgetting nothing, knew / Nothing but ruin. Why must we mistreat / Ourselves with Death who takes the world on trust?" In fact, all the poems in this volume revolve around death. These poems have "a plaintive appealing, a calling to those who are gone—a reaching towards, a mild beseeching, out of the loneliness of life, of the dead husband, wife, mother and brother . . ."

MY choice of Robert Lowell's poems is not meant to imply that the other poems are of less value or importance. Many of the others are outstanding, a few of which I can mention in passing. "In Memory of Arthur Winslow," an elegy for the poet's grandfather is the most cheerful poem on death that the poet has written. Though he castigates his grandfather for the "craft / That netted you a million dollars, late / Hosing out gold in Colorado's waste / Then lost it all in Boston real estate," he is confident that "the ghost / of risen Jesus walks upon the waves to run / Arthur" on to a new and better life. The last section is an impressive prayer to the Mother of God for his grandfather.

The two "Black Rock" poems are combinations of industrialization and redemption; of "Black Mud" which is a dragging body and a blue kingfisher, symbol of the redeeming Christ; of a world built of "defense-plants" and bent on "nightshifts" in the season of Christ's birth.

Some of the poems, like "The Death of the Sheriff," and "Her Dead Brother," deal with incest, a subject that Eugene O'Neill also associated with New England.

Lowell's departure from the Puritanism and Calvinism of New England has been sharp and complete. "Dunbarton" and "Children of Light" reveal a harshness that is not attractive. "They planted here the Serpent's seeds of light," he says; and, "Their sunken landmarks echo what our fathers preached."

There is little or nothing in the poetry of Robert Lowell to relieve the tension, either of a rasping, destructive nature, or of a blinded, deceived, and sinful race of men. The world in his eyes is an oceanic wasteland where the souls of men are tossed to and fro, violently and inexorably, till they must reach the depths of despair. Into this life already wasted and miserable comes greed; greed for land, which is imperialism; greed for money, which is capitalism; greed for power, which is war; greed for sex, which is incest and infidelity; greed for man-made religion, which is Puritanism; greed for one's self, which is suicide. All aching humanity, burning with greed and guilt and shame, is in tears for salvation that can come only through repentance; if it does not desire repentance, then the fires of hell and damnation must be evoked as a threat, for "the Lord survives the rainbow of His will."

St. Augustine and Blackmur on Rhythm

BY R. J. SCHOECK

TEACHERS of medieval literature and students of the history of aesthetics and criticism know how little read St. Augustine's *De Musica* is in our day. Assuredly, one needs all possible approaches to and bearings on this and other works of Augustine which hold such interest for the twentieth-century mind. One might almost say that a work like *De doctrina christiana* or *De civitate Dei* or *De Musica* needs, like the work of Milton, Dante or Aquinas, the apparatus of a *glossa ordinaria* for anything close to a full reading. Thus the suggestive approach of Father Squire through the symbol of the divine activity of the Cosmic Dance, of Shiva dancing, is valuable, as is Mr. Blackmur's synoptic commentary on numbers, rhythm and prosody. [R. P. Blackmur, "St. Augustine's *De Musica*: A Synopsis," in *Language as Gesture* (New York, 1952), ch. 18; Aelred Squire, O.P., "The Cosmic Dance—Reflections on the *De Musica* of St. Augustine," *Blackfriars*, xxxv (Nov. 1954), 477-84.] To relate these two approaches to each other is perhaps to suggest still another, or at least to provide a nexus between several areas and kinds of interest.

One misses much, obviously, if he fails to realize that for Augustine the study of numbers needed no ulterior motive. When Father Squire suggests that "the prospect of being brought face to face with that strange, Pythagorean, mathematical world which so fascinated Augustine is not perhaps an encouraging one" we might well demur: even from the modern position, looking backwards with condescension towards these dwarfs upon whose shoulders moderns stand, the central principle of harmony and symmetry is clearly manifest in the neo-Pythagorean doctrine of numbers. As Augustine elsewhere expresses it (in *De Ordine*), in number is the essence of both beauty and existence. We might more profitably turn to Blackmur's heuristic emphasis on procedures, his pointed comment that "to Augustine numbers were the structure of being and it was through numbers, whether as rhythm or as mathematics, that intuition could reach the nature of being." And we ought to read Blackmur further on the patterns of number in poetry and music:

[the patterns] served as reminders of the skills of thought which have nothing to do with the language of words. For him the meanings of words were arbitrary, and by human authority, while the meanings of things, such as those which numbers moved, were true . . . (p. 367)

This insistence upon a distinction between *rem et verbum* (a distinction which,

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to be sure, has roots in the teachings of the classical rhetoricians) is more fully developed some six centuries later by Hugh of St. Victor in *De Sacramentis*. In other writings the words alone carry meaning, but in Scripture not only the words but the things may mean something. And Augustine is no doubt setting up in his treatise on music correspondences with his theological teachings; what is said here is ancillary to his scriptural and dogmatic work:

To Augustine the numbers made the form of the meaning according to laws which, with licenses of silence and elision allowed for, were absolute, were of interest in verse because of universal application, and were themselves a kind of limit to human knowledge. This is his way of claiming poetry as a form of knowledge, a form of being, or a form of revelation . . . (p. 367)

Here we might develop our discourse by turning to Father Squire's exposition of Augustine's use of our delight in music and the form of poetry as a hook to draw us from the world of sense to the world of spirit; and in this method is displayed the Augustinian concept of the role of intelligence in the life of contemplation:

The heavenly wisdom, which is its gracious crown, is a divine gift coming to the soul from above. But that soul disposes itself for the gift by purifying itself from the illusions of the life of opinion [*opinabilis vita*], and by striving, as far as it can, to understand itself and its relation to the world in which it lives. It is significant that in the *Retractions* Augustine speaks of the *De Musica* as dealing with one of the ways in which "the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." It is thus largely what we should call a work of natural theology in intention . . . (p. 481)

And now we must look forward to the fuller development of this point by Hugh of St. Victor in his *De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei*: with Hugh, the sacramental quality of the visible world resides in its act of representing as analagon the invisible world ("the invisible things of God"). Symbolism is grounded in the purposes of God, in the universal creation (the universal scheme of things), as well as in the nature and destiny of man.

IN THE treatise on music, then, is implied the Augustinian theory of poetry or music as "a kind of mode of action in the soul, which if not divine is yet divinely inspired": this view, largely implicit in Augustine, is slowly and intermittently developed until it flowers forth in Dante:

To Dante, Love breathed the modes of poetry; to Augustine there was an intuition through rhythm or numbers of God, so that numbers were themselves the mode of action for the soul, not alone in the words which are the phase of that action in poetry, but in the other phases of knowledge as well. *Arsis* and *thesis* are but the blow and gift of knowledge: they give it, whatever its phase (and the body, says Augus-

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tine, has a beauty of its own), equality, similitude, and order. It is the rhythm that tells us what the knowledge is . . . (p. 370)

(With Augustine's triad go St. Thomas' three conditions of integrity, proportion, and brightness; the definition of beauty by Albertus Magnus, as "elegant commensurability"—or that of Bonaventura, as "numerable equality"—comes more directly out of Augustine, who again seems closer to Cicero and the main rhetorical tradition.)

All of this is at best, perhaps, only a patchwork made from the reflections of a learned Dominican, and from the remarks of one of the most poetical minds of our critical age, a synergic mind deeply interested in the theory of numbers expounded by Augustine in a treatise on music. Yet I trust that the conflation of the one theological discussion of the Cosmic Dance with the heuristic and practive discourse of the other approach suggests a view of Augustine that might serve to light a few dark corners: first, to see the suggestion that "Augustine thought poetry itself an increment to creation" in terms of the later, and much more fully developed, conspectus of the Victorine *opus recreationis*; and second, not to urge the adoption or even borrowing from Augustine's theory of numbers, but to consider Augustine as always drawing from his rhetorical wisdom—as Blackmur declares,

his theory of our own tradition, of a *rhetorical* command, or let us say a rhetorical wooing power, over words, which we have forgotten . . . (p. 369)

And indeed, his Judicial Rhythm (his name for the last of his kinds of rhythm) might with great profit be thought of as "an equivalent, another version, for what Dante meant (in the letter to Can Grande) by the transumptive power of poetry." Father Squire goes on to suggest that "there would seem to be a case for distinguishing between that kind of rhythm of soul which is judicial in an aesthetic way and that kind which is judicial in an evaluative way" (p. 483). Finally, we are to see in the treatise on music an intersection of all the lines of force of the ancient rhetorical tradition (which carried so great a burden of classical learning) with the lines of movement of theological concepts of time; and in few other works of Augustine (save, of course, the *De civitate Dei*, where it is another version, and in another phase) do the ideas of time and energy, of motion and form, so intimately reside with each other.

Strange Voyages: Coleridge and Rimbaud

(Continued from page 70)

in escaping the first that they were never fully restored. If Rimbaud's ship on reaching the harbor had plunged to the bottom of the sea like Coleridge's, the obstacles might have been removed to the attainment of the vision by the pool. If Coleridge's mariner had gone down in the harbor with his companions and had lain a fortnight dead, like Eliot's Phoenician sailor, he too might have had a sea-change—his bones picked clean by the current of the sea. For there is a kind of death that must precede rebirth. It is a truth that haunts most of Eliot's verse.

It is not irrelevant to speak of death and birth as a conclusion to the consideration of these two strange voyages. Miss Maud Bodkin rightly saw "The Ancient Mariner" as belonging to a larger archetypal pattern of rebirth. The same can be said of "Bateau ivre." They thus belong, despite their fantastic aspects, to a stream of writing that is central to literature and to a theme that is fundamental to the inner life of man. It is possible to stretch the images and over-extend their meaning, but such meaning is implicit in them and cannot be gainsaid. In positing it there, one cannot go wholly astray.

Hopkins and Welsh Prosody

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adapted to Scotist philosophy and which in technique appears elaborated somewhat in slight borrowings from Welsh alliterative patterns. Welsh influence is further limited by the fact that Hopkins had already developed independently, before coming on the Welsh, forms identical to some *cynghaneddion*. With the exception of limited alliterative borrowings, the achievement of a poetic ideal in similar form in Hopkins and the Welsh is coincidental.

Review-Article

Mauriac and Recent Critics

L'Agneau. By François Mauriac. Paris: Flammarion.

Journal V. By François Mauriac. Paris: Ed. La Palatine.

Mauriac par lui-même. By Pierre-Henri Simon. Paris: Ed. du Seuil.

Mauriac. By Jacques Robichon. Paris: Ed. Universitaires.

François Mauriac. By Martin Jarrett-Kerr. Yale. \$2.50.

FOR quite a few years it has been evident that François Mauriac was seeking a way to renew his technique and to enlarge his themes as well as his field of observation. From several sources, not all of them hostile, the accusation had been leveled that his vein was exhausted since all his novels returned to the exploration of the same old conflicts. Mauriac's surprising dereliction of the novel for the drama, in 1938, was already an effort to acquire a new form of expression. Among subsequent novels, *Le sagouin* bears primarily on the psychology of a child and even depicts, for the first time in Mauriac's works, a happily married couple. *Galigai* presents the spectacle of a friendship between two young men degenerating into a more sordid attachment. *L'Agneau*, recently published, is obviously dictated, both in presentation and subject-matter, by this same determination to give to the public a work which would not be "just another Mauriac."

Readers of Mauriac are familiar with his unflinching use of backdrops, an inversion of the time element which, starting with a present scene as the natural outcome of previous events, moves to a description of these events which become thereby the substance of the book. *L'Agneau*, however, extends this form of composition in a way that is at first rather disconcerting. The key scene appears in three different episodes at three different points in the book, (at the beginning, before the seventh chapter, and at the end), but it is never fused into the body of the narrative. It is written in italics. Granting that this scene is necessary to an understanding of previous events, it is difficult to justify its dispersion in three parts since there is no close temporal relationship between each part and what follows immediately. It is probable that Mauriac has been inspired here by his dramatic technique of dividing his plays into three acts. After having transported the novel to the stage, Mauriac is now, in a sense, adapting the stage to the novel.

The characters of *L'Agneau* are: Xavier Dartigelonge, a young man; Jean de Mirbel and his wife, Michèle, whose household is torn by dissension and sexual incompatibility; a young governess, Dominique; a parish priest; a young urchin, another Sagouin, also unloved by the de Mirbels who had adopted him when it became apparent that they could have no child of their own. Jean de Mirbel and Brigitte had appeared already in *La Pharissienne*, but their rôles are now reversed. While Jean was a minor character in the previous novel, he becomes the major protagonist facing Xavier; Brigitte Pian, the woman of the Pharisees, has only an incidental position, although she continues a hypocrite in her old age. The scene is laid in the familiar estate

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in the Garonne region, where Mauriac habitually and most happily situates his characters. But against this otherwise peaceful landscape a bitter and tense drama unfolds. Xavier Dartigelongue, on a train taking him to the seminary in Paris, meets a stranger, Jean de Mirbel, who has just abandoned his wife. In order to save the household, Xavier astonishingly decides to renounce his vocation and accompany this stranger when he promises to return to his home. Both husband and wife lay claim to Xavier's affection in fits of jealous, possessive love. In his pursuit of self-sacrifice, Xavier renounces Dominique's love. He then attaches to the ungrateful ward, and, later to the country priest who confesses that he has lost his faith. One evening, when Xavier is returning by bicycle from a visit to the priest, he is run over by an automobile driven by Jean de Mirbel. It will never be known, not even to Jean, whether he intended to kill his friend, or it was an accident. But the immolation of "l'agneau," for such is the sense of the title, will bear its fruit: Jean will become reconciled with his wife and the priest will recover his faith.

This brief account of the plot cannot convey fully the intricacies of the drama. Neither can it measure the involvements nor assess the motives which have their roots in the characters' recesses. It would seem that Mauriac is gradually evolving towards a psychology of confused characters, more in the tradition of Proust and far removed from the classical types, the miser, the lustful, the *générrix*, that people his greater novels. And so more room is left for individual interpretations. But it is clear that Mauriac considers Xavier a saint since the latter is the recipient of preternatural gifts such as the ability to read souls. Yet he is weak and irresolute at times, obviously attracted by Dominique's youth, and he passes without transition from the heights of elation to the depths of despair. We do not know, nor does he, whether he answers the call of God or is the victim of illusions. It is difficult not to see in Xavier a relative of the Country Priest or of the hero of *Sous le Soleil de Satan*. The very substance of the novel is undoubtedly the communion of saints, the great Bernanosian theme.

Mauriac has become bolder, in his last three novels and in his last play (*Le Feu sur la terre*), in presenting, or rather hinting at problems of abnormal psychology, such as homosexuality, frigidity or impotency induced by mental complexes, and even incest. But this is done lightly, and only by way of allusions which might escape uninformed readers. This might be nevertheless a significant development in his attempt to renew his depleted resources. There is also a strong melodramatic note in this work, reminiscent of the ill-fated stabs at humor which caused the downfall of his play *Passage du malin*. But the general atmosphere is tense and somber in this great drama of immolation, where poor creatures bear souls perpetually burdened by sin.

Journal V follows the pattern of the three previous volumes (the first volume was more personal): it includes articles published in *Le Figaro* and in *La Table ronde* on various topics. We find here articles which appeared between March 1946 and December 1947. After *Commencements d'une vie*, Mauriac wrote that he would never again indulge in personal confidences. Accordingly, we must not expect intimate revelations in the *Journal*, but rather Mauriac's position on contemporary political, religious, social, and literary problems. A work such as this, generally tied to current events, runs

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the risks of losing all interest with the passing of time. Mauriac's articles, however, escape this shortcoming because thoughts and reflections inspired by particular incidents transcend these incidents and point quickly to the eternal problems involved. The post-war period has been particularly trying for Mauriac. He has seen many dreams come to naught: the hope of a continued collaboration with the Communists on the national plan, the hope of continued concord among Frenchmen. But his stature has grown by the forcefulness of his declarations, and his uncompromising stand whenever principles are at stake. These articles reveal aspects of Mauriac's personality which are not revealed by Mauriac the novelist. He is obviously an admirable controversialist, handling with ease the logical path to inescapable conclusions; he relieves his indignation and sober irony with occasional flashes of humor. Two articles, "*Les catholiques d'extrême gauche*" and "*L'autre danger*," bear on positions which have excited for some time interest and recriminations among American Catholics, namely the attraction that Communism seems to hold for some misinformed, but no doubt sincere, French Catholics. They have seen only what communistic tenets have in common with evangelical teaching, the love for the poor and the worker, and devotion to an ideal of peace. But Mauriac knows that only the Church possesses the integrity of her doctrine, a doctrine aped by Communism to hide a satanic hatred of God and an utter scorn for man. Mauriac rejoices that the Church in France has at last found her freedom and is now beholden to no political party. A moving and enlightening homage, "*L'un des élus*," is devoted to Claudel on the occasion of his admission to the French Academy. In its abridged form, this article is also a penetrating study of Claudel's person and his work. Several articles deal with the once pressing but now solved problem of the parochial schools.

Ecrits intimes contains four essays published elsewhere. They are *Commencements d'une vie*, *La rencontre avec Barrès*, *Journal d'un homme de trente ans*, *Du côté de chez Proust*. Even the two essays which appear to be literary criticism are in fact autobiographical in character and relate only the circumstances of Mauriac's meetings with Barrès and Proust. *Commencements d'une vie* is too well known and has been analyzed too often to require comment here. It is, as the title indicates, an account of Mauriac's childhood and the composer's only authentic, chronological autobiography. The second essay deals with Mauriac's first years in Paris, around 1910, when his first work of poetry attracted Barrès' flattering comments. The most interesting passages of this article are those in which Mauriac relates the incidents of his student days, his significant meeting with Jean de la Ville de Mirmont, the struggle of a Catholic boy and temptation. The *Journal d'un homme de trente ans* covers the period of 1914-1923. It is not, like Gide's, a diary kept faithfully day by day, but reflections, frequently of a moral or religious character, inspired by circumstances and recorded at irregular intervals. The strictly autobiographical elements are important but casual. Mauriac was sent to Greece in 1917 with the expeditionary forces. There he contracted malaria and was evacuated to France where he was released from military service. This entire period is dominated by deep feelings of melancholy and loneliness, almost despair, but sustained nevertheless by an abiding faith in Providence. Mauriac has perhaps never written more touching pages, partly inspired by

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his poor health but even more by the sadness of these days when France was threatened in spite of the sacrifice of so many lives. *Du côté de chez Proust*, a title inspired by Proust's first chapter of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, attests to Mauriac's admiration for this author so despised by Claudel. Indeed Mauriac does not approve of the immoralism of Proust's picture, but he is inspired by his understanding of human psychology and by a unique consecration to the work of art even at the price of his life. Five letters from Proust to Mauriac, reproduced here, give evidence of a close relationship between the two, at least during Proust's last years. But perhaps the most arresting pages in this essay are those of Chapters five and six devoted to Jacques Rivière, the "witness of Proust." Rivière remains one of the most attaching and mysterious figures of that generation, for he is the author who, in captivity in Germany, could write the deeply Catholic and almost mystic *A la trace de Dieu* only to return to a Godless life in the difficult milieu of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. Mauriac analyzes Rivière's book with admirable lucidity, not allowing his sympathy for the man to diminish his impartiality. He feels in his heart that the man capable of such elevation finally met God in a death-bed repentance. The five letters of Rivière to Mauriac that are published *in extenso* in chapter eight, deal primarily with literary themes but offer nevertheless a likely basis for Mauriac's conviction.

Pierre-Henri Simon, author of several partial studies on Mauriac, writes at last an entire appreciation for the series, "Ecrivains de toujours." This compact book is, in many ways, a revelation and lively illustration of Mauriac's works. There are about eighty photographs of Mauriac at various stages of life, of his estate Malagar, of pages of his manuscripts, of his friends, of his family. To those who have read only his works or who have seen him at a distance at some official celebration, and who are perhaps repulsed by the atmosphere of tragedy in which his characters live, or by his own appearance of sometimes disdainful aloofness, it will be surprising to see Mauriac in a relaxed attitude and even smiling. Several pictures of Malagar will help some to follow better the action of most of his novels which are laid in estates patterned generally after Mauriac's property near Bordeaux. Mauriac has inserted in Simon's pages several comments either to confirm or to correct assertions of some critic. This is essentially the sense of the sub-title "*Par lui-même.*" Simon has tried to let Mauriac talk as much as possible, using published texts liberally throughout his book, and devoting the last ninety pages to selections from the author which best reveal him through the lips of his heroes. In so doing, Simon establishes with Mauriac's assent, the autobiographical character of the passages used, in fact which will, it is hoped, settle at last an often debated problem.

But one should not get the impression that Simon's contribution is only a work of selection and organization. The first part of the book constitutes an excellent appraisal, frequently original and always sound, of Mauriac's inspirations, of the influences which have shaped his thought and style, and of his style itself. I would challenge only the appellation of "romans-poèmes" with which Simon characterizes Mauriac's novels, and the limitations deriving therefrom. This term would apply only to the mediocre novels until *Le Baiser au lépreux* (1922). It is a dramatic spiritual universe, described precisely, in a well defined décor, all antithetical to the poetic conception,

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which we encounter in the works of Mauriac's maturity. The book ends with photographic reproduction of an unpublished manuscript recorded by Mauriac with his "wounded voice" on his sixty-fifth birthday, to be broadcast after his death.

The work of Jacques Robichon appears also in a series, "Classiques du XXe siècle," which now includes such contemporary authors as Camus, Malraux, Maurras, and Maurois. No one could fit more easily into this collection than Mauriac, whose connections with the classics have been so frequently noted. In his useful foreword, Pierre de Boisdeffre explains the specific meaning which must necessarily be attached to the word "classics" as it is understood here. It applies to those writers who have already withstood the test of time and who might therefore be considered as models. The formula of the series requires the author to insert abundant biographical details and lengthy texts in sound and often subtle criticism.

Following a loose biographical method, Robichon characterizes each period in Mauriac's life by a dominant trait. In a book planned, as the author warns, for the general public and foreigners not versed in French literature, one must expect repetitions of well-known facts and accepted judgments. Yet it abounds in new vistas and original points of view. Nor is it, as might be feared, a eulogistic presentation of a great writer: some passages must have made Mauriac wince. Robichon dismisses, almost brutally, the early novels as devoid of interest. There is sometimes an apparent disorder created by the multiplicity of subtitles and the necessity of attaching works, often written much later, to the specific period of Mauriac's life to which they refer. Thus *La Rencontre avec Barrès*, composed and published in 1945, is used to elucidate the events which marked the year 1910. This organization, however, is rendered necessary by internal logic. Broadly, Robichon distinguishes three phases in the life of Mauriac. The first is dominated by "l'héritage romantique," here understood less as precise influence than as an atmosphere of subjectivity, of emotional outbursts and unstable sensitivity. Mauriac gradually emerged from that period, but many of these elements never disappeared completely from his works and are present even in his best novels. Around 1925 a second period begins, marked by a form of "Christian romanticism," when Christian themes such as grace, sin, and the corruption of human nature, took the ascendancy. One could obviously quarrel with these broad categories, and they do seem strange in a series which proposes to present the twentieth century classics. They do not seem, on the surface, to take into account the splendid form of Mauriac, and the magisterial organization of his works, which are truly classical in the strict sense of the word. Robichon has not ignored essential aspects of Mauriac's works, but they are dimmed by the emphasis put on personal inspiration which borrows from introspection and external observation nothing more than the framework for the development of an eternal conflict.

The title of the third division, "La Religion dans la cité," is more confusing still, and would lead one to seek in Mauriac some concept of social religion akin to that of Bourget or Barrès. In fact, it is the impact of religion or of the lack of it on the family which Robichon studies here, particularly in the novel that Du Bos called "the Catholic novel *par excellence*," *Le Noeud de vipères*, as well as in *Le Mystère Frontenac*, the antidote of *Le Noeud*. I would,

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however, object strenuously to Robichon's qualifications of *Les Anges noirs*, which, to his mind, is spoiled by a didactic and apologetic purpose. This work is probably not one of the greatest but neither does it deserve the critic's heavy sarcasm. Nor do I agree with his appreciation of *Asmodée*, Mauriac's first play, which he holds to be only a renewal of the Tartuffe theme. I have shown elsewhere that *Asmodée* was a far more complicated affair, involving a ramification of feelings, struggles, and passions difficult to unravel.

Robichon's work is abundantly documented not only by constant references to Mauriac's better-known writings, but also to newspaper articles, and critical studies. This is probably the first time that a biographer of Mauriac has revealed the fact, of common knowledge in French literary circles, that the author has had a vocal cord removed as a consequence of a cancerous infection of the throat. We learn also here that the Holy See had demanded of Mauriac a revision of his *Vie de Jésus* and that *La Pierre d'achoppement* almost brought Mauriac's excommunication.

I wish I could give equal praise to the diatribe that Martin Jarrett-Kerr has written under the disguise of a learned study of Mauriac. But these sixty pages of packed text reveal almost immediately a prejudiced or distorted mind. There is no more elementary principle of literary criticism than that which requires the critic to identify himself first of all with the writer's point of view, and to assess his results only in relation with his purpose. Jarrett-Kerr, on the contrary, ignorant or disdainful of Mauriac's purpose, proceeds to consider his work from a narrow, and strangely biased position. One is struck from the very first page by the inconsistencies of his declarations. "What does one need to know, apart from his works," says Jarrett-Kerr, "about the uneventful life of the novelist?" This is first of all a false premise when applied to an author who has put so much of himself, and his life, into his work. But then, a few lines later, we encounter a reversal of the previous assertion: "What is more important, far more important, to prepare us for and even to explain the strength and the limitations of his work, is the picture of his home and childhood." Jarrett-Kerr certainly misreads Mauriac with malicious intent when he accuses him of "defending a second-rate writer (Bazin) because, one suspects, his critical theory demands that he be considered first-rate" (p. 17). But one fails to see any such affiliation in the text brought forth by Jarrett-Kerr to bolster his statement (nor would one see it in the entire text devoted to Bazin!). Mauriac contents himself with the declaration that no soul ever has been wounded by that writer, for which, indeed, he deserves to be commended.

Jarrett-Kerr devotes most of his book to point out the so-called limits of Mauriac's art. He finds them with relish in the first novels on which he dwells more than necessary on the fallacious pretext that they have not been translated into English. We are willing to abandon most of them to his condemnation, with the exception, however, of *Le Fleuve de feu* (1923) which does not belong among the works of an immature writer. We grant also that Mauriac does not paint very skillfully the intricacies of Parisian life but the scenes set in the capital are few and relatively unimportant. We cannot judge Mauriac's art by them. Beyond those, there are very few concessions that we would be willing to make to Jarrett-Kerr's criticism. He taxes with

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unreality one of the most striking creations of Mauriac's dramas, the character of Blaise Coûtüre, in *Asmodée*, because he judges Coûtüre on the basis of a haughty and complacent declaration which sounds indeed ludicrous when taken out of context. He turns into a weakness what is in reality one of the finest achievements of Mauriac, his ability to mix realistic description with the interior monologue. But it is particularly Mauriac's supposed apologetic method which the critic finds objectionable. He does not like the death-bed conversion of many of Mauriac's heroes, never inquiring, for instance, whether or not these conversions are carefully prepared throughout the novel by indications that the grace of God was upon these sinners. Jarrett-Kerr judges severely what are most of the time only venial failures, or simply an author's peculiarities. What does it matter if Mauriac repeats, or approximates, the same scenes in several of his novels, or that "all little girls appear to have sturdy legs and low, broad rumps?" (I have not taken the trouble to check the accuracy of this last statement which seems at least improbable.)

Reluctantly, Jarrett-Kerr is at last compelled to list Mauriac's achievements. He is given credit for "the distinction of his style," capable of obtaining a "pregnant phrase." He has also some talent in handling the "relationship between his characters." But even that concession is tempered by the remark that Mauriac is not equally apt in painting his characters full-face. So it is, in Jarrett-Kerr's own words, a "heavily debit account" against Mauriac that he presents. After reading that book, Mauriac's admirers will present no doubt a much more heavily debit account against Mr. Jarrett-Kerr.

Fordham University

FERNAND VIAL

Book Reviews

Fisherfolk and Saint

François Malgorn, Seminariste. By Henri Queffélec. Paris: Mercure de France.

Un Homme D'Ouessant. By Henri Queffélec. Paris: Mercure de France.

Saint Anthony of the Desert. By Henri Queffélec. Translated from the French by James Whittall. E. P. Dutton and Co.

IN these three volumes Henri Queffélec proves himself a gifted writer of diversified talent. The first book is a collection of short stories, the second a novel, and the third a hagiography. Henri Queffélec is already known to American readers and audiences as the author of the novel *Island Priest* (*Un Recteur de l'Île de Sein*) which is the basis of the successful but problematic French film, *God Needs Men*.

Queffélec, who ranks high among contemporary French novelists, is a native son of Brittany. His descriptions of the human and physical climate of Brittany are authentic. He paints in swift, deft strokes the traits and gestures of his Armorican compatriots, and describes with sympathetic understanding their struggle for existence and their constant battle with the sea, and he recognizes in them the virtues inspired by their faith in God.

"François Malgorn, Seminariste" is the title given to the first story in the collection. The only unifying factor in the eight short stories contained in this volume is that all the characters are Breton and that all the scenes are laid in Brittany. François Malgorn is a young seminarian who falls in love with the village "ugly duckling." He leaves the seminary to marry her, but he keeps his faith. The real protagonist in this story is the Widow Malgorn, whose heart is set on finding peace, security, and prestige as mistress of her son's rectory. Her disappointment is so great that she refuses to forgive him even on her deathbed. *L'Amour et la Vie d'une Femme* relates the problems of a Breton woman who is married to an alcoholic. Because of a physical deformity she considers herself fortunate to have a husband and she endures all kinds of indignities for the sake of having children. Some of the brutal scenes are reminiscent of Zola's episode of the Bijard family in *L'Assommoir*. Among the six shorter stories one of the most interesting is "La Louche" (The Ladle). It is about a caterer who has a deep hatred for beggars, but who ends up by finding himself among their number. This tale has the humor, pathos, and unexpectedness of an O. Henry story.

Un Homme D'Ouessant is a simple but realistic account of the activities and difficulties of the island inhabitants of Ouessant. Ouessant, like the Ile de Sein, is a small island with few resources situated off the coast of the western end of Brittany. The scene takes place in the reign of Louis XVI after the American Revolutionary War, a war that cost the Island one-third of its male population, leaving scores of widows and children to fend for themselves. One of the surviving veterans, who are called "Americans," is Miserere. Because of his physical and moral qualities he is the acknowledged leader of the islanders. Miserere, however, is endowed with a strong spirit of independence.

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He refuses to submit to the rector's decree that bans the pillaging of ships wrecked by storms in the surrounding seas. He maintains that the material rescued from the wreckage is manna to the indigent islanders. Even the rectory is furnished with flotsam. Miserere's intransigence forces the priest to refuse him absolution in the confessional. Another indication of Miserere's independence is his reluctance to marry. In a country abounding in widows with small children bachelorhood is almost an unpardonable sin. Françoise Méar, an impoverished widow with three starving children, is unsuccessful in her attempts to lead Miserere to the altar, so she enlists the cooperation of the whole island in her cause. Miserere soon finds himself a complete social outcast. The climax comes when a storm rises and the prospect of a shipwreck is in sight. The islanders are again united under the command of Miserere. However, the ship capsizes before it reaches the shore and Miserere nearly loses his life. Françoise is at his side to comfort and succor him. This novel is a tribute to these vigorous, wholesome Islanders whose trust in God make them unafraid of life and its vicissitudes.

In *Saint Anthony of the Desert* Henri Queffélec departs from his realistic stories of simple, fictional Bretons to give us an illuminating study of a simple but real Egyptian, Saint Anthony the Hermit. His is not a study of the philosophical Saint Anthony at grips with intellectual temptations as described by Flaubert in *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* nor is it the Saint Anthony tormented by sophisticated, caricatured beasts as painted by Bosch. In Queffélec's opinion Rousseau, "le douanier," could have given a better interpretation of the desert scene by painting Saint Anthony surrounded by his naively theatrical beasts. Queffélec's objective is to portray as accurately as possible Saint Anthony the man, the living human being. He makes substantial use of the meager sources of material that are available on the life of Saint Anthony: the *Vita Antonii* written by his contemporary, Saint Athanasius, which contains very limited biographical data; the Coptic texts which clarify the historical background of the period in which Saint Anthony lived; and the gnostic writings which provide material on St. Anthony's personality and the role he played. Queffélec also acknowledges a great debt to Father Louis Bouyer of the Oratory who made available his thesis, "*Vita Antonii et la Spiritualité du Monachisme Primitif.*" With the help of these documents Queffélec reconstructs the whole span of the life of Saint Anthony, supplying with cautious speculation much of the information that is lacking. With scholarly thoroughness he re-creates the historical, political, social, economic, topographical, and theological scenes in which Saint Anthony moved about. Egypt in the third and fourth centuries was faced with many of the problems that are familiar to us today: foreign occupation, religious persecution, and oppressive taxation.

Saint Anthony, who was a member of a prosperous agrarian family, distributed his patrimony to the poor when he was a young man in order to be completely free to commune with God through prayer and meditation in secluded desert places. The peace and solitude the young anchorite sought were constantly interrupted by conflicts and battles with demons and beasts, temptations of sensuality and pride, and heresies. In spite of his enforced militancy this "athlete of Christ" reached the spiritual height he was seeking which he expressed in the apothegm: "I no longer fear God; I love Him."

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Although St. Anthony is credited with founding monasticism he was not an organizer nor an administrator, but the spiritual wisdom he gained through his rigorous but joyful asceticism made him a wise counselor to ascetics of his time and of all times. The reader is well rewarded by finding in this biography, which is very well translated, a work of interest, scholarship, and devotion.

College of New Rochelle

JOSEPHINE VALLERIE

Nihilism Exposed

Wyndham Lewis. By Hugh Kenner. New Directions. \$2.50.

MOST of this book is devoted to the novels of Lewis, and consequently to a discussion of characters, plots, and the Lewis theories of person, self, society, and the artist. It is an unfriendly book but it also presupposes much familiarity with the work of Lewis. For the unprepared reader the book is not likely to lead to a closer inspection of him. That, however, one hopes may prove not to be the case.

Lewis is in most respects the most eminent British painter of this century. His writings, Kenner admits, constitute "the most astonishing literary career of the twentieth century." Lewis is the man "to whose mind the Cartesian split and the Nietzschean energy were not hobbies but life-blood," and who "was better equipped than anyone else to write out of inner knowledge the tragedy of his time." Lewis has this kind of representative importance. To an exceptional degree his work has raised to the level of intelligibility what Eliot described as the "dissociation of sensibility" that set in late in the sixteenth century.

For Lewis has accepted, along with Yeats and Pound and Eliot the doctrinaire premises which produced the split. In a word, his triadic view of spirit, intellect, and sense is the neo-Platonic and Buddhist view of the opacity of intellectual knowledge and the illusory character of the human self. There is no vitality or reality in mind or self or the world. But Art is of the spirit, the divine spark in man (which is not the self in this doctrine) and art alone can impregnate the world with some quality of reality. I may not be untypical of most Catholics in having been slow to apprehend this matter. But the Romantics and the Symbolists necessarily regarded art as more real than the external world. The Catholic doctrine of the body-soul composite confers a substantiality on the existent such as it has had in no other view, pagan or heretical. All pagan religion and philosophy reposes immediately or ultimately on the doctrine of pre-existence. The core of this doctrine is the notion that man imprisons an uncreated divine spark within his body and within his soul. But the human self is no more identical with this bit of divinity within us than the same spark is identical with a stick or a stone. But the imagination of the poet or genius is more nearly identical with this bit of divinity within us than the same spark is identical with a stick or a stone. The imagination of the poet or genius is nearly identical with this uncreated spirit. The least vision or action of the genius is thus more real than all the rest of existence.

These views flooded into Europe in the fifteenth century. They underlie

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all the mechanic-materialisms from Descartes to John Dewey, since it is the merest whim whether these views are used to structure a Berkleyan idealism or a Darwinian mechanism. In this respect Hobbes was no more a materialist than Marx. Both regarded matter as an irreducible mental state. But mental states might well change with some rearrangement of the cosmic powers or aeons. And it is the business of the artist to be constantly shifting the scenery of existence about in accordance with his infallible intuitions of the cosmic weather. Art is revolution.

This is also the Coleridgean notion of imagination. Fancy is for Coleridge the imagination as understood merely in the tradition of Christian philosophy. The creative imagination in the Christian tradition is an intellectual power, not a super-human emanation from "spirit" or from the uncreated divine spark in the human soul.

On the other hand, Lewis, like Eliot and Yeats and Pound, assumes the Pythagorean and neo-Platonic doctrine of spirit and imagination as a divine or superhuman power. This power is no part of the human soul or intellect but merely imprisoned there. The tragedy and comedy of the human condition is a result of the juxtaposition of this divine spark with matter, sense, and intellect—a familiar existentialist conception, necessarily involving the doctrine of pre-existence.

Lewis makes great and grim comedy of the horror of spirit shackled to the dying animal or human body. His own point of view in comedy is expressed as opposite to Bergson's when he says that laughter results from the spectacle of things (that is, persons) trying to behave as though they were alive. Bergson found the key to laughter in persons behaving as though they were things. Bergson had not the courage of his own philosophical position.

And it is precisely the courage of Lewis in pushing the Cartesian and Plotinian angelism to the logical point of the extinction of humanism and personality that gives his work such importance in the new age of technology. For, on the plane of applied science we have fashioned a Plotinian world-culture which implements the non-human and superhuman doctrines of neo-Platonic angelism to the point where the human dimension is obliterated by sensuality at one end of the spectrum, and by sheer abstraction at the other.

This situation became so evident to Lewis in 1920 that he devoted the next two decades to warning us about and explaining the anti-human nihilism emanating from modern philosophy and physics, as well as our everyday activities in commerce and social engineering in this century. His political and social analysis pursued a humanist course but his art remained on the plane of the doctrinaire super-human level of abstract art and neo-Platonic "spirit."

His uncompromising exposés of nihilism, in the time-philosophers and positivists, went parallel with an artistic nihilism which gave "spiritual" force to his humanist pamphleteering. The result was that his double talk angered the élites who were playing these same games while his art frightened the ordinary public.

A case in point is his current novel *Self-Condemned*, which is set in Toronto and at Assumption College in Windsor. His central character René (reborn) Harding flees the success that he has won in England and sets

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out on a quest of self or soul-annihilation. He thus defies the gods in the manner of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. He refuses to accept his full term or sentence in the human condition. He wilfully seeks the "subhuman" conditions of a colonial metropolis as a means of freeing himself from the merely human fetters of comfortable English life.

This annihilation pattern of spiritual metamorphosis is the plan of all of the novels of Lewis. Usually, however, it is failure, driving the self to some sham existence to insure security and livelihood, that spurs his characters to extinction. But, for Lewis, to exist humanly is to be a failure.

The Revenge for Love was to have been called *False Bottoms*. That powerful work, like the *Apes of God*, is a presentation of the English art world, and of left-wing revolution, which reveals the shams and false bottoms of all popular and human fronts whatever. A Catholic can read such books with approval insofar as he finds them a revelation of the hollowness of merely human hopes. But it is necessary to recognize that for Lewis, as for the great pagan tradition of neo-Platonism and gnosticism, existence as such is the ultimate sham. To exist is damnation. To exist humanly is to be self-condemned or damned to the material incarnation of selfhood.

It just happens that in the new age of technology when all human arrangements from the cradle to the grave have taken on the hasty extravaganza aspect of a Hollywood set, the nihilist philosophies of neo-Platonism and gnosticism have come into their own. Existence is an empty machine, a cheap art work, they have always said. The soul is a shabby mechanism, the body a monstrous one. The spirit or artist says to body and soul, a plague on both your prisons. And now in the twentieth century when nature has been abolished by art and engineering, when government has become entertainment and entertainment has become the art of government, now the gnostic and neo-Platonist and Buddhist can gloat: "I told you so! This gimcrack mechanism is all that there ever was in the illusion of human existence. Let us rejoin the One."

This pagan unworldliness carried to its ultimate mystical point is what makes the work of Lewis so intense and his evaluation so fearless. The many who share his philosophy but who have lacked the courage to live or express it, he has pilloried and derided in the greatest satires in our language. They have had their revenge; but too easily, for they control the press and all the means of artistic reputation—so they have suppressed Wyndham Lewis.

It is hoped that Kenner's survey of his literary emanations will obtain him some serious attention.

St. Michael's College, University of Toronto

H. MARSHALL McLUHAN

Wanderer's Progress

Portrait of a Symbolist Hero. By Robert Champigny. Indiana University Press. \$2.75.

MR. CHAMPIGNY is well aware of the vagueness of literary terminology, and he takes great care in defining what he means by "symbolist hero" in his analysis of Alain-Fournier's novel, *Le Grand Meaulnes*. Robert Gibson's *The Quest of Alain-Fournier* (Yale University Press, 1954) was published after

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the completion of Mr. Champigny's monograph. Whereas Mr. Gibson's book is primarily a biography of Fournier, Mr. Champigny's is an ingenious, closely-argued study of the relationship between Alain-Fournier's character and the fictional characters of his novel, between Fournier's literal biography and its translation into *Le Grand Meaulnes*.

For Mr. Champigny, the symbolist hero is a romantic hero (that is, man in the *world*, as opposed to the classical hero who is man in *society*) and he embodies an aesthetic conception of life. "Fournier stands to Meaulnes, his aesthetic hero, in the same relation as Kierkegaard to Abraham, his religious hero." But Mr. Champigny elaborates the thesis that Fournier lived first as Seurel, who is the narrator in the novel, and then as Frantz de Galais, who is a static character. Only by writing *Le Grand Meaulnes* was Fournier able to be Meaulnes. We follow in this study not only the diversity of the novelist's incarnations, but also the role of Jacques Rivière and that of Fournier's sister, Isabelle, who became Rivière's wife. The literary influences of Nerval and Laforgue are analyzed, and the exoticism of the Sologne setting.

The French critic, Antoine Sonet, was perhaps the first to call attention to the manner in which Fournier described himself in his three characters: Frantz, Seurel, and Meaulnes. But Robert Champigny has explored this possibility in great detail and sees the three characters representative of three stages in a spiritual progress. Yet he makes no claim to a religious interpretation of the work. More appropriate terms, and he uses them as chapter headings, are "paysage," "mystery," "nostalgia." Fournier admired Claudel and Péguy. Mr. Champigny refers constantly to these influences, but wisely concludes that Fournier as novelist always kept what was most significant and precious to him separated from the religious.

Bennington College

WALLACE FOWLIE

A Cardinal's Defense

Cardinal Manning. By Shane Leslie with a preface by Sir Henry Slesser. Kenedy. \$3.75.

LIKE medieval knights Sir Shane Leslie, supported by Sir Henry Slesser, gallop into the tilting ground to champion Cardinal Manning's good name. Challenging Purcell and Lytton Strachey they lay them both in the dust. Nonetheless, Manning will always be in some respects a controversial figure. He possessed the serpent's wisdom in a fuller measure than most men. His subtlety perplexed some and baffled others, but it enabled him to estimate with uncanny instinct the enemy's strength and to outmaneuver forces overwhelmingly superior to any he could muster in his ceaseless battle for the souls of men. The battlefield on which he was engaged was no less than the whole nineteenth century world, unfolded in this biography of the great crusader, who led the fight for Christian principles against the growing powers of secularism on national and international fronts. For that reason it is an important book—historically because Manning's life is running commentary on the social, political, and religious events of his time—biographically as a convincing picture of one, whose character has suffered grievously from cynical innuendoes and baseless imputations.

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Sir Shane Leslie confutes these in the most effective way, by establishing beyond doubt, the integrity of Manning's motives throughout his career. Both as Protestant clergyman and as Catholic priest, alike as Anglican Archdeacon of Chichester and as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, it was the triumph of his mission, not any reflected glory, which animated him. From any viewpoint his life arrests attention. If he had followed his own inclinations and entered Parliament as a young man, it is more than probable that he would have become Prime Minister. If he had remained in the Established Church it is certain that Gladstone, his intimate friend, would have chosen him as Archbishop of Canterbury. His life as an Anglican is described here with penetrating insight—those Livingston years, where his tall ascetic figure became almost a part of the Sussex scenery, and those brief idyllic four years of his marriage. They are brought to life by Sir Shane Leslie's magic touch. Wherever Manning played his part from the schoolboy's highest ambition (he captained the Harrow cricket eleven) through his Oxford days and later in those tumultuous years of Catholic social leadership or during his growing prestige and power in Rome up to the final victory of his death in the stark self-imposed poverty of his London room, he was always in Sir Shane Leslie's words "a stormy success."

To turn to some of the specific subjects dealt with one may begin with the chapter on his relations with Newman. It is undeniable that there was a difference of temperament and approach which led to serious misunderstanding and unfortunate coldness between them. This has been magnified by some into more fundamental differences. But on fundamentals there was not only no difference but Manning's admiration for Newman's intellectual leadership was expressed in ways not generally known in his lifetime. When for instance mischievous rumors were circulated in Rome regarding Newman's orthodoxy it was Manning who sprang to his defense. Again it was Manning (contrary to what has been generally thought) who was instrumental in obtaining the Cardinal's hat for Newman. When one remembers Manning's prestige in Rome at the time and reads this passage from a letter, which he wrote to Rome it is not possible to doubt that his initiative was a determining influence. It was in these words that he spoke of Newman:

The veneration for his powers, his learning, and his life of singular piety and integrity is almost as deeply felt by the non-Catholic population of this country as by the members of the Catholic Church . . . In the rise and revival of Catholic Faith in England there is no one whose name will stand out in history with so great a prominence.

In justice to Manning no one should express an opinion on the relations between Newman and himself, who has not first read the chapter on that subject in the book under review.

Much space, of course, is devoted to Manning's social views. His foresight in detecting the end of the dynastic age and the coming Era of Democracy is reflected in the Encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno." Also his fearless leadership of unpopular (and at times what were ignorantly thought revolutionary) causes is told in detail, including his staunch support of Cardinal Gibbons, who never forgot the debt he owed Manning in winning his victory in Rome for the Knights of Labor. A very full and interesting account will also be found of Manning's role at the Vatican Council where he seems to have led the fight

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against the opposition. It was at the Vatican Council that his political sagacity can be seen at its strongest. He was more than a match for all the powers intriguing to prevent or to postpone the Definition.

There are so many directions from which Manning's life can be viewed that this book can be praised for the perspective it maintains. It must have been difficult to give so true a bird's-eye view of so vast an area. But we may be glad that the secret of Manning's greatness is not overlooked in the multitude of his achievements. That secret was his own spiritual life and his primary concern with the poor. That runs like a golden thread linking up everything else he did. His early years at Lavington and his Anglican years read like a spiritual preparation for his future work as a Catholic priest. When he resigned his Anglican Archdeaconry and took the decision of entering the Catholic Church he tells us it seemed to him like a death sentence which he was passing on himself. It was an act of the will based on conviction alone against all the sentiments and associations dearest to him.

But far from a death sentence it was the herald of a new day. From that moment the great purpose of his life began to be realized, a purpose which forms the theme of this biography told with all the dramatic incidents which Sir Shane Leslie is so adept in conveying from Manning's childhood in evangelical surroundings to the lonely if splendid eminence of the See of Westminster. There is a continuity because he made use of his own qualities and defects. He had no illusions about his intellectual endowments nor his power of leadership. His notes during his retreat before his consecration as Archbishop are printed in this biography. They show that he was fully aware that personal ambition had been a peculiarly strong temptation. But in recognizing it he turned it to magnificent use. He harnessed to Christ's chariot his own brilliant gifts and all the worldly opportunities, which had come his way, from high station and influential friends. Thus the defect of personal ambition, which he detected, was turned to higher things and his whole being was dedicated to God's service.

ROBERT WILBERFORCE

Seeing Greene

Graham Greene and the Heart of the Matter. By Marie-Beatrice Mesnet.
London: The Cresset Press.

Graham Greene. By Victor de Pange. Paris-Bruxelles: Editions Universitaires.

NOW that the much-discussed play, *The Living Room*, has run its brief course on the New York stage—a course that was made parlous by various Scylla and Charybdis critics and was timidly steered by the producers of the play—there will probably be little new production by Mr. Greene for a while. It is not that he will be exactly licking his wounds over the New York fate of the play, for he has the consolation that both Paris and London acclaimed it. He will, alas, be able rather to feel that the U.S. theater audience has but given another proof of its immaturity. Incidentally, can it be that I am the only person in all the critical world to think that the play's main theme was simply the indissolubility of marriage?

Well, while we are waiting for the next work from the pen of Graham

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Greene to set us in the controversial lists, here are two books that, if they do nothing more, point up the world importance of Greene as a creative writer. Whether he is to our taste or not, there is no gainsaying the fact that his techniques and his themes have caught the ear and the fancy even of those who are not in sympathy with the message he tells out in his somber pages. Or—and this is one question the two books touch—is the message somber?

Both books are at one in some of their approaches to the problem of estimating Greene, and in their agreement, they make use of phrases and terminology which do not add much to what has already been said about Greene. We hear, for example, that he works with "shabby human material" and manages to infuse into it a "spiritual intensity"; that all his books, from the earlier "entertainments" to the later more profound novels, "betray a longing for peace," a sense of "the terror of life" and so on.

This has been said before by various critics, and Mlle. Mesnet's book is the less remarkable of the two in that I fail to discover much that is original in her long essay. When she does touch on an important matter, such as the evident similarity between Greene and the thought of some French Catholic existentialists, she hardly does more than note the similarities and pass on. This, I believe, would be a fruitful field for extended treatment.

Part one is devoted to "The Landscape of the Drama" and develops the thought that much of Greene's work is shaped, as it were, by his sense of place, especially by the vivid impressions he got from the Dark Continent of Africa and from the Mexico of the persecutions. "The Drama of Freedom" is taken up in the second part and tries to indicate the balance between determinism and the freely-choosing human conscience. The final part is entitled "The Power and the Glory" and establishes the fact that over and above the "shabby human material" and the agonies and weakness and indecision is always the shadow of God's love.

I would recommend that this book by Mlle. Mesnet be read first as an introduction to the second, which, I feel, is much more complete and rich in suggestions. Even a brief indication of some of the chapter-headings will show that M. de Pange delves deep indeed into the background of the works. We have "Le Monde de la Haine et de la Violence," "La Ronde Infernale," "La Fuite Désespérée," "La Communion des Pêcheurs," "L'Amour Rédempteur," and so on.

Moreover, M. de Pange embarks on seas of Greene criticism that I have not seen ventured on before. He deals provocatively, for example, with the place of women in Greene's work and is bold enough to discuss a facet of Greene's work which one at first thought would judge not to be present at all—his humor.

He makes a good point, I think, in suggesting that Greene, as a convert, is still to a degree ridden by a certain fear in matters of religion that one born in the faith would not normally experience. With all the depth and fervor of his spiritual convictions, can Greene be, as it were, still somewhat on the outside looking in? This is not to question—as a critic cannot—Greene's own faith, and it is evident that all his characters, as M. de Pange well says, "acceptent les mystères de la Foi comme des réalités au même titre que les phénomènes matériels."

I feel that M. de Pange makes a little too much of the somberness in St. Augustine's theology of grace and attributes too much of that influence to

Greene, but it is certain that the author rises at the end of his study to a strong and, by now, well-documented statement that love, God's love, is the center of Greene's thought. As François Mauriac says in the introduction, "ce que je trouve d'authentique dans les romans de Greene, c'est la Grace."

Greene still remains a writer about whose head swirl the winds of controversy, but if any book to date sets him and his thought in their proper setting, M. de Pange's study does. It is highly recommended for its completeness, its detail (long sections are quoted from the novels), its thoroughly Catholic tone. It would be a good idea to issue the volume in English translation, to help settle the judgment of those who still just cannot make up their mind whether Greene is a master or a limited craftsman who is more or less obsessed with a single theme.

HAROLD C. GARDINER

Search for Serenity

Manzoni. By Bernard Wall. Yale. \$2.50.

BERNARD WALL is due a meed of thanks for his presentation of Manzoni's life, of his work as a poet and dramatist, and his authorship of *I Promessi Sposi*. Wall also remarks penetratingly about the place of this novel in literature. He considers likewise the controversial points that deal with Manzoni's religion and the problem of his language. This gratitude is due since the English-speaking world—as far as I am aware—knows only his novel in translation. Wall illustrates his analysis by his own translations of certain portions of Manzoni's poetry; he quotes from Colquhoun's translation of *I Promessi Sposi* (*The Betrothed*) published by E. P. Dutton and Co. (1951).

If there is one word that suffused the thought-life of Manzoni, it was the True. I capitalize with a purpose. The search for, and expression of the True, was an obsession with Manzoni. The discovery of truth constituted his beginning in beauty and poetry. But Manzoni had an instinctive love for history. So it is not surprising that as a result of studies in this field, he should find historical characters, whom he used in two tragedies, *Il Conte di Carmagnola*, published in 1820, and *Adelchi*, which appeared in 1823. So consistent was he in his presentation that, in *Il Conte di Carmagnola*, he divided the cast of characters into historical and ideal. One of his problems was the propriety of putting speeches, of which there was no record, into the mouths of even his historical characters. Detailed notices, giving the setting in history, in regard to personages, locale and customs, were published with the plays. Strikingly enough, he did away with the unities of time and place. Goethe was much impressed by these dramas; so much so, that he published lengthy articles in his journal *Über Kunst und Alterthum*. Fauriel, to whom *Il Conte di Carmagnola* was dedicated, published Goethe's *Examination* of the play along with his own translation into French of the two plays. This presentation to France, by Fauriel, and the stamp of approval of Germany's grand man of letters, revealed to Italian eyes the worth of their compatriot.

Everything that Manzoni had accomplished in poetry, drama, and apologetics was as if in preparation for his *I Promessi Sposi*. Rarely in the annals of literature is there such a case of author and work being so closely identified. The re-

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sult was as near perfect as could be expected in the expression of ideals lived by the author, based on sensitive reflection, evident in the life-like characters, created against a setting of war, famine, and pestilence. Though written in Scott's heyday, this historical novel cannot be pigeon-holed as of the Romantic School. The author has injected so much of himself into it, in direct observations to the reader, that the latter feels that he is listening to an old and confidential friend, who knows ordinary mortals, because of his keen and thoughtful insight, based on understanding love. Somehow, one subtly feels the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, in the humility and sincerity of the author, projected into the lives of the protagonists in their behavior during the events they live through.

Wall devotes most of his enlightening analysis to an account of the plot, and of the principal characters and incidents of *I Promessi Sposi*. His opening paragraph gives an incomplete, and therefore distorted, presentation of the genesis of the novel. By quoting this paragraph in full, it will be easier, in the statement that follows, to put this genesis in its proper perspective:

All Manzoni's life as an artist, then, led up to the writing of *I Promessi Sposi*, which he began in 1821. The first edition appeared in 1827, but he felt dissatisfied with it, partly on grounds of Italian style, for it contained many Lombardic and French expressions. So he turned his attention to the question of language, and spent a period in Florence to improve his knowledge of Tuscan and "rinse his clothes in the Arno." The definitive version of the novel was published in 1840-1842. Nobody, so far as I know, has ever disputed the superiority of the perfected work, which, apart from improvements in style, contains many interesting additions and omissions. I emphasize this point because second versions are often inferior to first versions—Tasso, for instance, ruined his *Gerusalemme Liberata* by "improving" it in this way. It has been possible for critics to follow the development of *I Promessi Sposi* from its very earliest stages and thus to mark the improvements in Manzoni's craftsmanship. His latest version was very much more muted than his earliest; he preferred to suggest rather than to narrate, and he left more to the readers' imagination. He was a master of the "work of the file" in the classical or Virgilian sense.

Manzoni commenced composing on April 24, 1821. The manuscript ends with the date: September 17, 1823. This first manuscript, entitled *Gli Sposi Promessi* was not published till 1916. The editor, Giuseppe Lesca, lists at the bottom of each page: each correction, variant, warning by Manzoni to himself as to future corrections, and comments by Fauriel, who was visiting Manzoni, and by Visconti, an able literary critic. Photographic facsimiles illustrate Manzoni's mind and method at work, composing his thoughts on the right half of the sheet, crossing out, filling in, and making additions on the left half. It was not till 1827, that what is known as the first edition was published. The fundamental revision in materials and method of presentation had already been made for this edition. Throughout his active life, Manzoni was extremely conscious of language. Feeling that in subject matter and characters he had something that might appeal to Italians as a whole, and realizing that the language and idioms he used *could not be understood and*

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appreciated by all, he determined to visit Florence. And spending several months in 1827 in that city, hearing every day in active use the speech which he considered as the norm for Italian, he set himself the task of patiently revising the language of his novel, in vocabulary and idiom.

Wall's statement that "Manzoni's influence abroad remained at a standstill during the nineteenth century" puzzles me. What does he mean by "influence"? In its broadest sense, can it mean—not a large number of translations and imitations—but a steady interest in an author's work and personality, as shown by a deep and developed critique of his work? If we grant this, then the French, all through the past century, have shown their appreciation for him, and have expressed it generously, as Dorothée Christesco has amply documented in her *La Fortune d'Alexandre Manzoni en France* (Paris, 1943).

Wall does not mention any of Manzoni's theoretical writings, except to list them in the Biographical Notes. This may be due to limitations of space. These writings include a *Lettre à M. Chauvet*, published in 1823 in French, a language in which Manzoni was a master. Herein he explained why he did away with the use of the unities of time and place in *Il Conte di Carmagnola*. This reasoned exposition supplied just the sufficient spark for a revolution in the French theater. It furthermore contributed notably to the developing Romantic School. True it is that all six of the English translations of *I Promessi Sposi* in the nineteenth century, were either inaccurate, clumsy, or incomplete. Yet Edgar Allan Poe, in a review in the *Southern Literary Messenger* (May 1835) of a translation by G. W. Featherstonhaugh, shows his interest in language. Goethe was also keenly aware of the problems involved in translation. If he had been younger, he said, he would have undertaken a version himself, treating it as he had the *Autobiography of Cellini*. Poe's concluding comment on style furnishes something to ponder over:

The style is, for the most part, Italian, in English words, but Italian still. This is a great fault. In some instances it would be unpardonable. In this instance, perhaps, it is more than compensated by a kindred excellence. In a work like this, abounding in the untranslatable phrases of popular dialogue, it gives a quaint raciness which is not unacceptable. It does more. Such translations of such works, would soon make the English ear familiar with Italian idioms, which once naturalized, would enrich the language.

Poe later gives "a short extract as a specimen of the writer's power. It is a picture of some of the horrors of the plague." Poe's short-story, *King Pest*, published in the same periodical, later in the year, has echoes of what he had read in Manzoni's climactic account of the plague in Milan.

It should be provocative to consider some of Manzoni's own ideas as to an author and his work. He stated that there are: "Three things to which attention must be paid when judging a work of literature: 'What is the intent of the author? Is this intent reasonable? Has the author obtained it?'" Bonghi tells of having found among the manuscripts of Manzoni

a little piece of paper on which was transcribed in English, in his own hand, a sentence taken from an English book of travel . . . The sentence is to the effect that when society will become more enlightened,

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it will no longer tolerate a literature considered as a work of art. It is, as you see, an excessive way of expressing the sentiment, that the end of a literature does not lie in itself, but in the social and moral perfection which it is intended and adapted to produce.

With this in mind, we are not surprised that Giuseppe Verdi requested the privilege of composing a Requiem Mass in honor and memory of his friend.

And, in hearing the *Requiem*, one can meditate on Manzoni's "message" for our modern world—similar in many ways to the period of travail of Italy in his youth—that, amid war and its aftermath, trust in God's providence brings serenity.

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GEORGE R. LOEHR

A Mass of Light

Aux Creux du Rocher. By Raïssa Maritain. Collection Sagesse et Cultures. Paris: Alsatia.

THOSE who read Raïssa Maritain's prose work, "Les Grandes Amitiés," published during World War II, will greet this short collection of poems with anticipation. In "Les Grandes Amitiés" Raïssa Maritain gave us an intellectual and spiritual biography, "un acheminement vers la foi catholique." In the thirty-seven poems assembled in "Aux creux du Rocher" she gives poetic expression to her feelings and thoughts concerning nature, man, and God, chiefly during the baffling war years. These emotions and reflections will not become "dated," however, for they have depth and timelessness.

The title is taken from the first lines of a poem dedicated to the Virgin Mary and entitled *Mosaïque*: "Comme au creux du rocher la colombe tranquille." Raïssa Maritain chose to group her poems under three different headings. The first, "Sous le ciel élusif" (Under the Elusive Sky), includes her nature poems. The second, "Portes de l'Horizon" (Doors Beyond), deals mainly with the mystic life. The third, "1943," is self-explanatory, with a single long poem "Deus Excelsus Terribilis" (dated New York, 1943).

Versatility in form is one arresting feature of this book. Raïssa Maritain passes skillfully from free verse to alexandrines to rhythmic prose. Perhaps one of the best selections is the one she named "Renouvellement des Images." It illustrates her transition from material to mystic images while she resides in post-war Rome:

Nous étions à Rome, non loin de la Place d'Espagne, au milieu d'une foule nombreuse et agitée, inquiets nous-mêmes. Était-ce la guerre qui approchait? Alors, vers la gauche du ciel, parut une masse du lumière. Dans la clarté du jour elle avançait distincte. En avançant elle ressembla d'abord à un amas d'étoiles. Les étoiles grandissant à mesure, nous vîmes qu'elles étaient en rangs serrés, comme une armée de jeunes hommes vêtus de blanc et de noir, et la grâce et la joie se répandaient sur leur passage. Tout devint beau d'une beauté resplendissante et extraordinairement précise.

But Raïssa Maritain's images are not all wrapped in mysticism. Many

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deal with simple themes: trees, birds, clouds, lakes, and rivers. There is a charmingly wistful one on the Seine at Paris, called "Au point du jour." Whatever the subject, her treatment is never marred by banality.

The briefest poem in the collection is "Recette":

Ni coeur ni âme—de l'esprit
Très peu d'azur—beaucoup de palmes.

This two-line poem may be interpreted by some as a "boutade," an example of cynical wisdom; to others it will stand as a curt condemnation of some contemporaries.

Raïssa Maritain does not hesitate to bring to task the evils of our times. In "Deus Excelsus Terribilis" is heard the powerful voice of one who, having been brought up in the Jewish faith and traditions, later chose to become a Roman Catholic, without repudiating her own people:

Avant l'opprobre des Nations
Soeurs de misère et de hont.
Avant le massacre innombrable des Juifs
La pitié d'Israël immolé par des esclaves,
Salus ex Judaeis!

Somewhat similarly the late Henri Bergson—a Jew who voluntarily wore the star of David during the German occupation of Paris—gave evidence of the same loyalty to the Jewish people. Raïssa Maritain's lines will arouse in many readers indignation towards those who perpetrated crimes against the Jews. When she wrote in 1943:

Israël a été conduit à la boucherie,
Troupeau sans pasteur sans bergerie,
Il a été traqué comme du gibier
Dans les villes et les villages.
Le sang marque la trace
De L'espérance condamnée.
C'est Votre lignée, Seigneur, que l'on extermine!
—Les puissances, meurtries et blasées
Ont oublié de prévenir le crime.

she not only blamed nations for their indifferences, but also addressed a cry of despair to our Lord.

One becomes increasingly interested in the poet's thoughts on death, on faith, on man in relation to God. Her poems provide an intense esthetic experience and a source of meaningful personal meditation.

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GERMAINE MERCIER

Austrian Interplay

Literaturgeschichte Österreichs. By Josef Nadler. Salzburg: Otto Müller.

HE liberation in 1945 of Austria and the political rebirth of the state have led to a resumption of the question about the characteristics of Austrian literature. (For only the most obdurate die-hards have lately doubted

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the existence of an autonomous Austrian province within the realm of German letters.)

In the field of literature proper we are witnessing today the slow but steady resurgence of Franz Grillparzer as a major figure of the nineteenth century. In our time the Austrians Rilke and Kafka have been acclaimed as the leading German writers, second in significance to nobody, with the possible exception of Thomas Mann. The Viennese Hugo von Hofmannsthal is being rediscovered by Western Germany to such an extent that practically every festival of the summer season 1954 included, as *de rigueur*, either his *Jedermann* or his *Salzburger Grosses Welttheater*. Posthumous honors are being bestowed upon Karl Kraus and Robert Musil. And a new and unmistakably Austrian writer of impressive stature has appeared in Heimito Doderer, whose novel *Die Strudlhofstiege* might very well warrant a translation into English. Thus we are faced with a compact body of literary documents that date from the twelfth century to the present. But we find it much easier to establish the identity of Austrian literature than to define its characteristics.

Professor Josef Nadler, author of the four-volume *Literary History of the German Tribes and Landscapes*, possesses a quantitatively vast knowledge of his material, which extends to the remotest corners and down into texts of third and fourth rank. An Austrian by birth, he was a student of August Sauer, and held, from the early thirties until 1945, the chair of German literature at Vienna University. Yet, as the title of his *magnum opus* indicates, his is a predominantly ethnological approach. His concept might resemble Herder's idea of the "climate" that conditions the creative efforts of the human race, were it not that it lacks Herder's respect for the impalpable and intangible. Basically it is a projection of Taine's milieu theory onto the level of anthropology, if not the crudest form of anthropology, racism. To be sure, it is indispensable to establish ethnic and racial roots of literary phenomena as a groundwork for any historical analysis. Yet as a yardstick for a critical assessment of literature, a materialistic method like Professor Nadler's proves insufficient and, as often as not, misleading. Austrian literature in particular owes its climaxes and its weaknesses to the transcendence of physical determinants by means of a tradition which has changed incessantly, and yet remained faithful to itself. A history of Austrian literature cannot but devote itself to tracing the development of this tradition, self-contradictory as it may seem, through the course of the centuries. In this respect an impressionistic book like that of poet Felix Braun—*Das musische Land* ("Essays on Austria's Landscape and Poetry," 1952)—contains more penetrating insights into the character of Austrian literature than the professor's elaborate enumerations.

Of course, the history of Austria and her literature is a history of contrasts, and even paradoxes. The idea of the empire, the Austrian *Staatsgefühl*, has been in constant interplay with the will of the nationalities dwelling within the orbit of this empire. The very idiom of Austrian literature—dialects reaching up into the level of literary language—bears witness to this interplay. Austrian literary language had to adjust itself to themes and backgrounds produced by the whole of Europe, and by Asia as well. Occident and orient unified in a literature that was a world literature before Goethe, and independently from him. In Vienna proper, imperial pride and a metropolitan

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laissez-faire struggled against a most backward provincialism; the Latin influence of the church and the humanistic one of the higher schools had to contend with a popular imagination that was as colorful as the populace itself was motley. To press complexities like these—and they are far from being the only ones—into the Procrustean bed of racial data is, indeed, a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The shortcomings of Professor Nadler's method grow in number and weight proportionally with the growth of the Austrian tradition itself. They come to a climax in Nadler's treatment of the first half of our century. To quote a few examples: "Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 1847 to 1929, of Vienna, originated on his father's side in the Bohemian perimeter, and with his Milan grandmother in the Italian one . . ." (p. 460). Apart from the fact that in Hofmannsthal's work the Bohemian influence is of less importance than, say, the Greek, the Spanish, the French, none of which can be derived from any ethnic relationship, Professor Nadler keeps silent about the poet's Jewish ancestry. If one is to point to racial determinants at all, one is certainly bound to single out Hofmannsthal's as one of the few successful symbioses of the German and the Jewish within German literature, a symbiosis made possible by the Austrian climate as well as by the personal decision of the poet to cement this union by an ever deepening adherence to the Christian faith.

Josef Weinheber, a rather popular talent who failed when he tried to outgrow his natural limits by adopting the one of "high" poetry, is accorded ample space in this densely filled book, almost as much space as Georg Trakl whose imagery has, next to Hofmannsthal's, captured and preserved most of Austria's grandeur and decline. Yet the reader is not informed of the reasons of the death of Weinheber, who killed himself in 1945 because he could not face the consequences of having belonged to the Nazi party. By his suicide Weinheber shed new light on one of his books. Why this silence? The death of a writer, especially if it is self-willed, is as important to the historian as his birth, or his racial pre-history.

A history of literature passes judgment not only by actual verdict but by the space allotted to individual figures. Thus we must take it as an expression of Professor Nadler's personal bias that Kafka and Werfel are mentioned but once (p. 476). In one sentence they are brushed aside with other offspring of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. And, to add ridicule to injustice, they are lumped together with Leo Slezak, the tenor, who happened to write obtrusively chatty memoirs. Does Professor Nadler exclude their native city, Prague, from the Hapsburg empire? If so, his longish paragraph on Rilke, another Prague poet, is out of place.

Joseph Roth, whose novel *Radetzky* is an ironical swan song of the monarchy, has been altogether forgotten. Neither has Hermann Broch—forced out of the country like Roth—been found deserving of a word, although his *Sleepwalker* trilogy and his epoch-making paper on Joyce cannot have escaped Professor Nadler's attention.

Provincialism was certainly one of the dialectic constituents of Austrian literature. Putting dialectics aside, Professor Nadler has accepted this provincialism as his basic principle. Sigmund Freud (Nadler spells "Siegmond") is dispatched in three sentences, the last of which runs: "With his *Interpre-*

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tation of Dreams of 1900 and his annuals Freud has immeasurably influenced literature, although he must not be blamed personally for all the excesses of this erotic literature of dream interpretation, (p. 412)." Expressionism is found unsatisfactory since it is "no native produce" (*kein Landesgewächs*) (p. 477). Nonentities from Styria or Carinthia are praised and advertised, whereas the experimenters, the internationalists, the Europeans are cut down to the measure of provinciality or completely forgotten. How could it be otherwise? Professor Nadler's *History of the German Tribes and Landscapes* propounded a theory that was in many respects a forerunner of the *Blut und Boden* dogma adopted by Nazi Germany after 1933. In this *History of Austrian Literature*, finished in 1948 and published in 1951, he has pruned some of the old excrescences, suppressed some old distortions. Love of the spirit has not entered his mind, nor has justice, charity, or grace.

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HEINZ POLITZER

Faith and Letters

Studies in Literature and Belief. By Martin Jarrett-Kerr. London: Rockliff.

WHAT this book attempts and what it accomplishes are two different things. It seemingly sets out to examine on a theoretical level problems both difficult and important. The author realizes that the loss of a single religious tradition has meant that the metaphysical and religious implications of literature become more, not less, marked than in an age when the metaphysics or religion could be taken for granted. Attempting to examine the relationship of belief and literature he therefore raises the question, Do sound doctrines produce sound works of art?

To this question he is eager to answer with an emphatic affirmation because he wishes to assert the unity of the artistic experiences and to avoid such distinctions as T. S. Eliot has made between philosophic belief and poetic assent. At the same time he wants to avoid over-simplification. The result, I think, is a muddle which has the virtue of raising many significant questions and the vice of answering none of them satisfactorily on the theoretical plane. Much more cogent are the careful distinctions set forth by William Joseph Rooney in his *The Problem of Poetry and Belief in Contemporary Criticism* (Catholic University of America Press, 1949).

However, the present book is important not only in the specific comments along the way but in entire chapters which separately deal with various actual examples of the problems with which he is concerned. In these, in spite of weaknesses in his theoretical framework, Jarrett-Kerr is full of challenge.

In a chapter on "The Ballad and Society" he finds that genre illustrating the assimilation of belief; in another on Calderón he sees the greatness of the dramatist as a combination of romantic imagination with intellectual discipline and the guidance of a clear theological belief. Where Calderón is dramatically weak his theology is weak; in these instances "Faith tended to eliminate sympathy, and instead of illuminating unbelief it has had the effect of erasing it."

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A chapter of high praise is devoted to *I Promessi Sposi* by Manzoni, "the last of the Christian humanists" who nowhere parades his Christian faith in an aggressive or proselytizing manner, the last European writer to be able to take belief, unargued for, as the background of his picture of life. Jarrett-Kerr accounts for this by pointing out that this is partly because he was from childhood soaked in Italian peasant Catholicism but also because he chose for the *mise en scène* of his great novel a period, the seventeenth century, when such belief was simply there, given.

In almost direct contrast he devotes the following essay to Dostoevsky as illustrating "the agony, both of belief and of disbelief," pouring his own questionings and doubtings, his reassurances and flashes of certainty, into his characters.

The little-known Swiss writer, C. F. Ramuz, is sympathetically evaluated for his technique of presenting personal relations as analogies of the divine.

Readers of *Renascence* will be particularly interested in Jarrett-Kerr's comments on Bernanos, Claudel, Greene, and Mauriac.

The real difficulty in assessing Bernanos as a novelist is, he asserts, that the atmosphere he creates is so engulfing that the reader must either take it whole or reject it whole. Further, Bernanos has a tendency to use tactics that intimidate the reader: he never argues about the supernatural; he hurls it at one. The result is always powerful and sometimes—as in *Sous le soleil de Satan*—cogent. But Bernanos sometimes lacks charity toward his bad characters: as the saintly Chantal's father, M. de Clergerie, says to his daughter in *La joie*, "One feels that you have not sufficient pity for poor wretches who wallow like me, in the mud of the world."

Claudel's intimidation is of a different kind: his magnificent rhetoric has a hypnotic power which drugs criticism into the silence of stupor; he is like an actress in one of his plays who knows that she is successful only because the audience are afraid of the truth and come to the theater to watch something which will make them forget their own truth.

Graham Greene is accused of a self-defensive attitude which makes him constantly intrude his own comments in his novels; in addition there is in him an almost Calvinistic strain which results in literary failure.

Mauriac also intrudes himself. Jarrett-Kerr disagrees with such critics as Gide and Cocteau who have contended that Mauriac professes Catholic orthodoxy in person but abandons it in his novels. The opposite, says this critic, is true: the intrusion into the novels of precisely this orthodoxy and its implications is frequently their ruin. This applies in particular to that preoccupation of the Catholic apologetic novelist: the final choice at death. Thus in Mauriac there are dramatic death-bed scenes, the last confession or the conversion *in extremis* which become a cliché.

Readers will undoubtedly quarrel with such judgments but these are critical comments worth discussing, and they raise issues which are very relevant to the relations between literature and belief.

JOHN PICK

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